AN

ESSAY

To Revive the

Primitive Doctrine

and Practice of

INFANT-BAPTISM

In the Reſolution of four

QUESTIONS.

I. What are the Reaſons of God's appointing the Token of the Covenant to be applyed to the Infant-ſeed of his People?

II. What is the Good or Benefit they receive thereby?

III. What is the duty of Parents towards their Children as bearing the Token of the Covenant?

IV. What is the Improvement that Children as grown up to years of Maturity, may and ought to make of the Token, as applyed to them in their Infancy.

By *Joſeph Whiſton*, Miniſter of the Goſpel.

Many ſhall run to and fro, and knowledge ſhall be increaſed, Daniel 12. 4.

Nil erubeſcit veritas niſi abſcondi, Tertul.

LONDON, Printed for *Jonathan Robinſon*, at the Golden-Lion in St. *Pauls Church-Yard*. 1676.

TO THE

Judicious Reader.

He Subject matters treated of in theſe Eſſayes are confeſſedly weighty and important: ſomethings in them, it muſt be acknowledged to many, if not to moſt in this age will ſeem new, and at leaſt, before a through weighing of the whole, and diligent collation of one thing with another, ſomewhat ſtrange; and no wonder, ſeeing none of late have profeſſedly handled the two former queſtions (wherein what is dubious and ſubject to cenſure will eſpecially be found) here diſcuſſed. Whence I cannot but expect that ſome, poſſibly not a few, ſo ſoon as they underſtand how high I have carried the priviledges of the ſeed of Believers, and how great a good I have aſſigned to them, and that univerſally, will reject the whole as novel, unſound and erroneous, though upon no other account than the different apprehenſions themſelves have hitherto had together with a prejudicate perſwaſion of the impoſſibility of yeelding ſo much to the Seed of Believers, and that univerſally, and yet maintaining thoſe great doctrines of Election, &c. So long contended for by the generality of Proteſtants. To ſuch I have little to ſay, ſave only to aſſure them that I hold, and am ready, according to that ſmall Talent I have re-

ceived, to contend with them for those Doctrines, as to the Sum and Substance of them, that they are justly jealous of having any breach made upon, and had I apprehended any inconsistency between what is here offered and those Doctrines, these Papers had never seen the Light: But as for others, who by humility, sence of imperfections, and consciousness to themselves of not having made so thorow an inquiry into these matters as may be made, are kept apprehensive of a possibility of receiving an addition to that light they have received about them; I hope I may without offence humbly recommend these Essayes to their serious perusal, not desiring a sudden complyance from any; that a through-search be made into what is here offered, and things duely compared the one with the other, is all that I expect. That some Essays of this nature should be made seems necessary, it being sufficiently known by all how great a let to the imbracement and comfortable walking in the practice of Infant Baptism the want of a satisfactory resolution of these questions hath been and still is. What more frequent in the mouths of the unwary rejectors of that practice than such questions as these? For what reason can it be imagined, that God should appoint such a solemn and weighty Ordinance as that of Baptism is, to be applyed to Ignorant Babes, who can make no use or improvement of it? or what good have they by it? or if we will assign any good to them that is worth contending for, how can we maintain those doctrines of Election and Special Grace, &c. we so zealously assert? The removal of of which stumbling-blocks seems necessary, and is here designed. That the Infant-Seed of believing Parents are interested in the Covenant of Grace, or are confederates with their Parents, and have a right to the token of the Covenant, which now is Baptism, are here taken for

granted

granted, and lie as the Foundation to the ensuing discourse: and indeed both these now appear with so much clearness of evidence, and meet with such feeble opposition from Men contrary-minded, that I cannot see how any can rationally expect the further establishment of either, but may justly expect we should build upon those Foundations laid. And to nothing can the steadfastness of the generality of judicious Christians, whether learned or unlearned, in their Judgments and Practices respective to the Covenant-Interest and Baptism of the Infants we speak of, be so properly, and according to any principles of Christianity, attributed on this side the watchfull eye of the great Shepherd of the Flock, as to the clearness of that evidence, especially considering how little inquiry hath been made into, and how little satisfaction hath been given about the question here debated. Neither ought nor rationally can any different apprehensions discernable about the resolution of these questions, wherein the structure to be raised doth consist, be interpreted as a weakning to the Foundation laid, though such an evil construction is put upon them by some. For my self, however I may be apprehended, by such especially that stand aloof off, and view my work at a distance, to have built but Hay and Stubble; yet upon a through scrutiny and just trial I cannot but hope, yea, and am greatly perswaded, it will be found what will abide the Fire. Indeed in my search after the good, benefits, and advantages accruing to the Seed of Believers by their Covenant-Interest and Baptism, I have walked in a Path much unfrequented of latter years by the Foot of Man, and have seen many dangerous Rocks and Precipices both on my right hand and on my left, and that not at a great distance only, but very near, which how to avoid I must say hath cost me some serious

thought: besides my way hath been not a little obscured and obstructed, by the various cross traversings to and fro both by Friends and Foes. Yet I hope through the good hand of God upon me, and that light he hath afforded me, my way is safe; Yet this I shall freely acknowledg, 'tis not only possible, but very probable that such as shall adventure into this search, will discern my steps have not been so even, but that they will see it necessary sometimes to tread out of the very Steps that I have taken: yet this I am much perswaded of, that as they will find the Good, Benefits and Priviledges assigned by me to the Seed of Believers, do indeed appertain unto them; so they must walk at least very nigh the Path I have gone in. Yet I shall not be positive and peremptory, that the Infant Seed of Believers can have no interest in the Covenant, nor right to Baptism, unless they are granted to have all that good, and all those benefits and Priviledges that I have assigned to them; much less will I say that no other mediums can be found out to evince the necessary redundancy of all that good, and all those Benefits and Priviledges from their Covenant-state and Baptism, than what I have made use of; only this I must say, I cannot at present see how we can maintain the former, and not grant the latter. 'Tis true, the good, Benefits and Advantages I have assigned them are great and glorious; but the serious consideration that it is a Covenant of Grace that is extended to them, and taking due measures of the unsearchable Riches of the Grace of God, the shewing forth and illustration of which is designed by his entring Covenant with Man, will be of no small use unto any that shall pursue the enquiry I have entred upon. 'Tis certain, 'tis a most glorious expression of the Grace of God, that he should extend his Covenant to the seed of his People with themselves, and grant so much

much good to them thereby, Yea I think it may be ſaid, tis one of the moſt glorious expreſſions God hath made of his Grace to Men, next to that unſpeakable Gift the Son of his Love. But ſeeing 'tis a Covenant of Grace, and God the Author of it is ſo unſearchably rich in Grace, why ſhould the Glory of it obſtruct our belief? Why ſhould it ſeem incredible, that God ſhould extend his Covenant to Infants, and grant them all that good that hath been aſſigned freely, though themſelves are utterly uncapable of performing any duty antecedently as the condition, or conſequently immediately by way of gratitude, when where he doth impoſe a condition as in reſpect of the adult, yet himſelf gives it, and what fruit of gratitude he receives, is found *(as the Prophet* Hoſea *ſpeaks)* in himſelf? *It's true ſome of our oppoſers, to the prejudicing of their own minds, and for the laying ſtumbling-blocks in the way of others, have pretended that we hold the ſame conditions are incumbent upon Infants even in their Infant-ſtate, that are incumbent upon the Adult, only that Parents are taken as proxies to perform the condition in the room and ſtead of their Children. A great miſtake. We ſay the Covenant is wholly free to Children during their pure Infant-ſtate, and that no condition at all is incumbent upon them, only that they be the Seed of Believers. Hence, when we ſpeak of the condition of Children's Covenant-Intereſt, we mean no more, but that it is neceſſary that they be the Seed of Believers, the promiſes being* to Abraham's Seed *(and ſuch confeſſedly true Believers are,)* in their Generations. *And why the greatneſs and glory of that Good, and thoſe Priviledges and Benefits aſſigned to them, ſhould ſtumble any, I can ſee no juſt reaſon, if it be conſidered that it is the Covenant of Grace that is extended to them, and due meaſures of the*

Grace

Grace of God be taken, and both considered in conjunction with his design in establishing his Covenant with, and granting all the Grace and Blessings of it unto Men. Though truth, as its Author neither needs, nor is much advantaged as to its entertainment by those, whose care it is to receive the Law from the mouth of the Supreme Law-giver by the testimony of Men; yet when any Man hath a Call to expose to publick view, what he conceives to be so, which carries an appearance of dissonancy from the known sentiments of the generality of Orthodox Divines contemporary with him, to evidence the correspondency thereof with the Principles and Judgments of former Divines, of equal repute for Orthodoxy and Soundness in the Faith, may be useful, both as a means to secure himself from the censure of singularity, and what he exposeth to view from rejection, before a through-enquiry be made into it. As for what I have asserted, I am willing it should undergo the most severe Scrutiny by all unbyassed and judicious lovers of Truth, and answerably that it should be rejected, or embraced, according to the Evidence it carries along with it. Neither shall I make much search after the Judgment either of ancient or modern Divines; neither have I, as the Case at present stands with me, a convenient opportunity to do it: Yet this may be said in the general, 'tis well known to all that have any considerable acquaintance with their Writings, that the generality, if not the universality of the Fathers living in the first Ages, did grant, yea assert the full of what I have done, and, as most think, somewhat more; but therein I doubt not but they will be acknowledged by those I have now a special respect unto to have exceeded the bounds of Truth, and consequently that what they have allowed

be-

beyond what I have asserted, must be reckoned inter nævos. *That wherein (it is true) they have declared their Judgments most clearly and fully in and about, is those two Benefits I have assigned to the infant-Seed of Believers,* viz. *Their discharge from the guilt and condemning power of Original sin, and a right to future Salvation, and consequently their infallible enjoyment of it, in case of their death in their pure Infant-states. But they that have granted them these two Benefits, cannot be rationally supposed to deny the third,* viz. *Their interest and propriety in God, seeing pardon of sin and propriety in God are inseparable. And yet that they did universally assert the necessity of their personal Faith, and closure in with the Covenant, when come to years of maturity, is undoubted. So that, I conceive, it will be readily granted, that the Judgment of the generality, if not the universality of the Primitive Fathers, lies on my side; and that wherein I dissent from them, they themselves dissented from the Truth. Indeed it must not be denied that at least too many seem so, possibly some really did, ascribe these things too abstractedly to Baptism, not having that regard to the Covenant that they ought to have had; but that all, yea, or the major part, especially in the purer Ages of the Church, did so, is not only more then can be proved, but the contrary may be rationally concluded from variety of passages scattered up and down in their Writings. As for our modern Divines, especially those of the present Age, I shall readily grant they have been, and still are, as to the major part of them otherwise minded. Their mistakes I humbly conceive need rectifying in order to a through establishment of the minds of Men in the practice I in common with them plead for; and therefore their bare testimonies*

ought

ought not to be improved againſt me. Yet I am not wholly ſingular, ſome in this preſent age, and more in the ages laſt foregoing, have ſufficiently declared their Judgments in a nigh if not exact correſpondency to what I have affirmed. The 17 Article of the Synod of Dort, *in their firſt head of Doctrine,* viz. *Predeſtination, come up fully to part of what I have affirmed, and therefore I think meet to tranſcribe it. It is this,* Quandoquidem de veritate Dei ex verbo ipſius nobis eſt judicandum, quod teſtatur liberos fidelium eſſe Sanctos, non quidem naturâ, ſed beneficio fœderis gratuit, in quo illi cum parentibus comprehenduntur pii parentes de Electione & ſalute ſuorum liberorum, quos Deus in infantiâ ex hâc vitâ evocat, dubitare non debent. *Which ſeems neceſſarily to require, as might eaſily be made out, conſidering their judgments in all thoſe five controverted points, that they ſhould hold the full of what I do. And as theſe worthy Divines expreſly declare their Judgments to be for the Election and infallible Salvation of all the Infant-Seed of Believers dying in their Infancy; So I ſhall quote one famous in his day (to let paſs particular Divines of that Synod) exactly concurring with what I have ſaid concerning the diſcharge of all Infants we now ſpeak of from the guilt of Original Sin; that is famous* Urſin; *His words are theſe.* Peccatum Originale in Baptiſmo formale tollitur, ſed materiale manet; *that is, as himſelf expounds,* tollitur quoad reatum, manet quoad pravitatem. *Some others of the ſame mind with me as to the main Good, Benefits and Priviledges aſſigned to the ſeed of Believers might be mentioned, and a further ſearch into the Judgment of Authors concerning that way I have proceeded in, to ſecure my ſelf from thoſe Rocks bordering upon it, was intended; but an unexpected Providential*

vidential removal of me from my ſtudy, when I was about to put the laſt hand to the enſuing ſheets, prevented by means whereof the Book appears more naked than otherwiſe it might have done. But to haſten. The Reader may take notice, that the firſt draught of the ſolution here given of the two firſt queſtions was drawn up about four or five years ſince; but I was not without ſome hopes that ſome abler Pen might have performed this Work, and when I ſaw a call to it, I was willing rather to go gradatim than run, that I might tread more ſecurely. Upon both which accounts, with ſome others, my firſt promiſe hath been ſo long unperformed, and now at laſt it being performed, I muſt ſay two things greatly check my expectations as to the deſired effects of this my undertaking.

The firſt is the curſory reading and curly peruſal of Books by the generality of Readers. How few ſhall we find that will be at the paines, or allow themſelves ſufficient time throughly to weigh and well digeſt what they read, and with the noble Bereans ſearch the Scriptures daily, whether the things they read be ſo? How do moſt curſorily read Books coming to their hands? and if any thing appear to correſpond with their precedent ſentiments, they readily embrace that, or if any thing diſagree therefrom, they as ſuddenly reject without a due weighing of what is written, and comparing one thing with another: But alas! Divine Truths, eſpecially that lie more towards the bottom of thoſe Golden Mines contained in the Scriptures, or are obſcured by the different ſentiments and reaſonings of Men, will not be found out or diſcerned in themſelves, and diſtinguiſhed from errors at ſo eaſy a rate.

The ſecond is thoſe groſs neglects, that Parents are generally guilty of towards their Children. Oh the murders

ders even of their own Children that most Parents will be found guilty of! I mean it not of their Bodies, but of their Souls. Causa Causæ est Causa Causati *is a sure maxim. The Apostacy of Children is the cause of their Death, but the neglect of Parents is the great cause of their Apostacy. Parents will possibly catch at what makes for their comfort with reference to their Children, especially such of them as have been either carryed from the Womb to, or taken out of the Cradle, and laid asleep in the Grave; yet I much fear but few will be stirred up and effectually moved to a vigorous performance of their duty towards those whose lives are prolonged, and that arrive to that ripeness of age, that capacities them for the performance of the conditions of the Covenant themselves. Let but Parents throughly study their Childrens Priviledges as Coufederates with themselves, and faithfully apply themselves to the discharge of their duty towards them, and it will give good ground of hope that both he that hath sown, and they that reap, viz. both Parents and Children, shall have a time, or rather an Eternity to rejoyce together.*

Thine in the Service of Christ for thine own and thy Childrens Souls,

December 14. 1675. Jo. Whiston.

The

The Principal Errata's.

PAge 42. Line *ult.* for *in* read *on*. p. 64. l. 32. for *visible* r. *invisible*. p. 107. l. 5. for *sense* r. *love*. p. 112. l. 10. for *Assured* r. *offered*. p. 134. l. 5. for *not* r. *at*. p. 165. l. 11. for *it* r. *he*. p. 189. l. 4. for *or* r. *are*. p. 194. l. 25. for *for* r. *on*. p. 199. l. 29. after *he* add *the*.

The Errata's of least Concernment.

Pag. 8. l. 1. for *ye* r. *yet*, p. 23. l. 16. for *is* r. *was*. p. 25. l. *ult.* for *four* r. *three*. p. 39. l. 12. blot out *of*. p. 111. l. 3. for *application* r. *explication*. p. 112. l. 16. for *use* r. *esse*. p. 151. l. 1. for *by* r. *has*.

Errata's in the Contents of the Chapters.

Pag. 130. l. 2. after *Covenant* add *state*. p. 132. l. 6. after *all* add *that*. p. 162. l. 2. for *impossibility* r. *improbability*.

The Author having not seen the first and the three last sheets 'tis probable some faults are there escaped, which the Ingenuous Reader is desired to pardon, or amend.

The Author hath two other *Treatiſes* Intituled,

I. *Infant-Baptiſm from Heaven and not of Men*, Or a Moderate Diſcourſe concerning the *Baptiſm of the Infant-ſeed of Believers*. Whereunto is prefixed a large Introductory *Preface*, preparing the Readers way to a more profitable peruſal of that Treatiſe.

II. *Infant-Baptiſm from Heaven and not of Men*, the ſecond Part: Or, an Anſwer to Mr. *Danvers*'s Treatiſe of *Baptiſm*. Wherein, as the vanity of his Authorities are, though briefly, yet ſufficiently detected; ſo his Doctrinal Part is eſpecially examined and confuted, and Infants Right to Baptiſm further confirmed.

Both ſold by *Jonathan Robinſon* at the *Golden-Lion* in St. *Paul's Church-Yard*.

An Eſſay to revive the Primitive Doctrine of Infant-Baptiſm.

CHAP. I.

An Introduction to the whole enſuing Diſcourſe. The four grand Enquiries propoſed. The Reaſons of God's ordaining the Application of the token of the Covenant to the Infant-ſeed of his People, reduced to three heads: The firſt (viz.) thoſe reſpecting God, entred upon, three Reaſons reſpecting God aſſigned. Firſt, his own Goodneſs, Grace, and Sovereign pleaſure. 2. The Reference that the Application of the token of the Covenant hath to his Glory, the Ways how it refers thereunto, opened. 3. The reference it hath to the ſupportation and enlargement of the Kingdom of his Son Jeſus Chriſt.

THat all Ordinances and Inſtitutions that are indeed of Divine Original, have a direct reference to the glory of God, and are ſignally expreſſive of his good will unto Men, is above all controverſie among thoſe that bear the name

of Christians: yet wherein their reference, at least of some of them to that end, and of what use and advantage they are unto Men, and consequently what good will is expressed by them, is not discerned by many who have the truth of Grace. Hence it comes to pass sometimes, that some Ordinances whose claim to that Original is most just, yet are neglected by some, and utterly rejected by others, and that with the greatest fierceness of opposition, as judged of a quite contrary reference and signification. This (especially of later years) hath been the lot of that great Ordinance of Infant-Baptism; the main reason whereof seems to be the sad Corruption, or rather utter loss of the true Doctrine of the Covenant, especially of the Signs and Seals thereof, under that Antichristian darkness, that so long prevailed over the face of the Christian World. Neither is it to be thought strange, that a practice which is not apprehended to have any reference unto the glory of God, or the good and benefit of men, should be suspected as to its Original, and answerably rejected by Conscientious Christians. Hence the revival of the true Doctrine of the Covenant, and initiatory Seal, and Token hereof, at least so far as the seed of Believers are concerned in the one or the other, must needs have a great conducency to the establishing of the practice it self, as well as to the due improvement of it both by Parents and Children.

Some small essays of that nature are at present designed; only the Doctrine of the Covenant shall be no further lanched out into, than the resolution of four Inquiries relating to the Application of the Seal and Token thereof to Infants (the discussion of which hath been sometimes since promised) makes necessary.

neceſſary. The reſolution of thoſe Inquiries is the τὸ ἔργον of the enſuing Diſcourſe, whereby I am not without ſome hope, that at leaſt, ſome little light may ſhine forth for the diſcovery of what reference this Ordinance hath to the glory of God, and how great a ſignification it carries, and ſignal expreſſion it is of his good will to men. And as previous to a more clear procedure in what is intended, it muſt be remembred, that three things are at preſent preſuppoſed, and taken for granted as being elſewhere proved.

1. That the Infant-ſeed of Believers are Joynt-Confederats with their Parents in the Covenant of Grace, or have a true and proper intereſt in the Covenant of Grace.

2. That as Circumciſion of old was, ſo Baptiſm now is the outward Sign or Token of that Covenant.

3. That Infants as being within the Covenant, and under the promiſe of it, ought to have the outward Sign or Token applyed unto them.

Theſe things being already proved, I ſhall immediatly come to the diſcuſſion of the aforeſaid enquiries, which are.

1. What are the reaſons of Gods appointing the Application of the Token of the Covenant to the Infant-ſeed of his People.

2. What are the Benefits and Advantages ariſing and accruing to them thereby.

3. What is the duty of Parents towards their Children as bearing the Token of the Covenant.

4. What is the Improvement that Children themſelves, may and ought to make of the Token of the Covenant applyed to them in their Infancy, as they grow up to years of Maturity. To bigin with

1. The first, *viz.* Why God hath appointed, or what are the reasons of his appointing the Application of the Token of the Covenant to the Infant-seed of his People?

Answ. That all the Laws and Ordinances of Divine Institution, yea even those, of which no other reason can be assigned by us but the sole will of the Legislator, are most rational, as agreeing with the highest and most perfect Principles of true Reason, is abundantly secured by their alone Relation to him as his, who is the only wise God. Nothing irrational can be the effect of Infinit Wisdom. Hence, are we assured that any practice is of Divine Institution, we ought, and so far as our hearts by renewing Grace are brought to their due obedience and allegiance unto God, we shall readily comply with them, as acquiescing in their rationality as commanded by him, who is *Wise in Heart, as well as mighty in Power* or Authority. And hence it must needs be our Wisdom, as well as our Duty to bend our inquiries more after the will of God, constituting what shall be our Duty, than the reasons of his constituting this or that to be so. Are we assured of his will, his Wisdom secures his willing nothing but what is most rational, or what there is sufficient reason he should command; and his will alone is a sufficient warrant for our obedience. But yet God having made Man a rational and intelligent Creature, and given him eyes to see withall, he deals not with him according to mere Soveraignty, but indulgeth him a liberty, or rather injoyns it as a duty to enquire after, and satisfy himself about the rationality of his commands: only a twofold Proviso being attended unto.

1. That

1. That he keep himſelf within the bounds of Sobriety, and preſume not to be wiſe above what is written. *Non ſapit qui plus juſto ſapit.*

Secondly, That in caſe the rationality of this or that command appear not, either as not revealed by God, or as above the reach of his ſhallow underſtanding to diſcern it, he yield to mere Soveraignty, and anſwerably reſolve to obey, though he ſee no other reaſon, but only this that God hath commanded it. And for Chriſtians ſtill attending to theſe Proviſoes, to ſearch after, and acquaint themſelves with the reaſonableneſs of Divine Commands, or the reaſons of God's commanding this or that as a duty, conduceth not a little, as to their cheerful and complacential walking in ways of Obedience; ſo to their pleaſing and honouring God in and by that their obedience: For though it is true, Reaſon as darkned and corrupted in fallen man riſeth up with a ſtrong oppoſition againſt whatever is of God, the τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Rom.* 8. 7. *The wiſdom* or reaſon *of the fleſh*, that is carnal or corrupted wiſdom or reaſon being *enmity againſt God*: yet reaſon ſanctified and regulated by Supernatural light is highly ſerviceable unto men in matters of Religion, and greatly ſubſerves their yielding unto God due honour and glory in and by Univerſal Obedience to all his Commands. The more of ſanctified reaſon any man hath, the more clearly (ſuppoſing his due uſe and improvement of it) will he diſcern the rationality of Divine Commands, and conſequently the more fully and freely will he own and aſcribe unto God the glory of his wiſdom appearing in the commands, and chearfully ſubmit to his Soveraignty as commanding, and anſwerably honour him by a complacential obe-

dience. Hence Christians of the highest reason, supposing them proportionably renewed and sanctified, will be most to the honour of God, and walk with the greatest delight and satisfaction to themselves in his wayes. To bring what hath been said to the instance before us, though the alone Revelations that God hath made in his Word of his Will, that the token of the Covenant should be applyed to the Infant-seed of his People, (did no reasons of that his Will appear) would be sufficient warrant for our practice, and ought to oblige all men to a complyance therewith; yet to make some inquiry into the rationality of that practice, or the reasons of Gods injoyning of it, will be greatly useful as to the establishing the practice it self, so to Believers chearful walking therein, and honouring God thereby. The reasons then may be considered, either with respect unto God instituting, or the Parents, to whose Seed the Token is to be applyed, or the Seed to whom the Application is to be made.

1. For the reasons respecting God, and thus a threefold reason may be assigned.

1. His own Goodness, free Grace, and soveraign good pleasure. One special reason of all divine Institutions, yea of all that God hath done, or doth, whether as Ligislator or Benefactor, with reference to the benefit of faln man, must be resolved into his Goodness, free Grace, and soveraign Will and pleasure. *Thou art good* (saith the *Psalmist* speaking unto God, *Psal.* 119. 68.) *and doest good.* God doth good, because he is good, *He worketh all things according to Councel of his own Will*, saith the Apostle, *Eph.* 1. 11. As the mere goodness of God is the Fountain and original Spring of all the good he communicates to,

or

or any way expreſſeth towards the children of men; ſo he worketh in the various communications and expreſſions thereof after the alone Counſel of his own Will. Hence as the youchſafement of the Covenant with a Sign and Token, ſo the commands requiring the Application of this Token to Infants, as well as to the adult, muſt be aſcribed both to his Grace and Goodneſs, and alſo to the pleaſure of his Will. The Protomartyr *Stephen* enumerates the giving unto *Abraham* the Covenant of Circumciſion among the various expreſſions of the goodneſs and kindneſs of God to him, and his ſeed; for it was given to him not only for himſelf, but for his ſeed alſo: *Acts 7.* 8. *He gave unto* Abraham *the Covenant of Circumciſion*, the Covenant ſealed and confirmed by Circumciſion. For God to give to *Abraham* and his Seed the Covenant, was a glorious expreſſion of his goodneſs to him and them; but to add an outward Sign for the confirmation of it was an aggravation of that his goodneſs. The confirmation of the Covenant by an outward Sign adds to the value of the Covenant it ſelf, and is a higher expreſſion of the goodneſs of God both to his people and their ſeed. Hence for Parents to accept of and apply the Covenant with the Sign and Token thereof onely for and to themſelves, but to refuſe to do the like for or to their Seed, is to reject no ſmall part of that goodneſs he deſigned for them, and had by the true tenor of the Covenant granted to them; which ſuppoſing it may not be interpreted ſuch a deſpiſing of his goodneſs as the Apoſtle upbraids the Gentiles with, and by which, as he tells them in *Rom.* 2. 4, 5. *They treaſured up to themſelves wrath, againſt the day of wrath,*

Fœdus Gratiæ quod obſignavit ei Circumſione. Piſcator in loco.

and revelation of the righteous judgment of God: yet it comes ſo nigh to, and participates ſo much of it, as ſhould make all tender Conſcientious Chriſtians greatly cautious of it. We ſee how much God was provokt by *Ahaz* in refuſing a Sign when offered for the confirmation of a particular promiſe. How much more provoking may it be, when Parents not only refuſe the Sign of his Covenant, but his Covenant alſo though not for themſelves yet for theirs? 'Tis above queſtion to me, that it is leſs dangerous to err on the right hand, and would be vaſtly leſs diſpleaſing unto God, for Parents to claim the Covenant for their Children, and apply the Token of it to them, upon a ſuppoſal of their intereſt therein, ſuppoſing the one not to extend, nor the other to appertain to them; than to reject and refuſe the one and the other, ſuppoſing the one doth extend, and the other appertains to them. *Favores ſunt ampliandi*, Favours are to be inlarged. 'Tis certainly more dangerous to narrow and ſtraiten the favours of God to men, than to overamplify them in caſes that are dark and doubtful, though here I conceive the caſe is not ſo, but I ſpeak upon ſuppoſition that it were indeed ſo. The undervaluing or refuſing any expreſſion of the Grace and goodneſs of God unto men is greatly provoking to him. *Eſau* to this day bears the brand *of a profane perſon* for parting at ſo low a rate with his birth-right, *Heb.* 12 16. 'Tis dangerous either to have our eye evil becauſe God is good to others, or to undervalue or reject any expreſſion of his goodneſs to our ſelves, or ours, but that's by the way. Now I ſay it is from the goodneſs and free Grace of God, guided in the various expreſſions thereof by the alone Councel of his own will, that he hath extended his Covenant

Covenant with an outward Sign and Token annexed, either to Believers, or their Seed, ſo one ſpecial reaſon of the one and the other muſt be aſſigned thereunto.

But then ſecondly, The next reaſon reſpecting God *in the* reference and ſubſerviency that the Application of the Token of the Covenant to the Infant-ſeed of Believers hath to his own glory, he is greatly glorified thereby, and that ſeveral wayes.

1. His Goodneſs, Grace and Love in extending his Covenant unto them is made more manifeſt and conſpicuous unto men. As in the adminiſtration of the Lords Supper, the death of Chriſt is openly ſhewn forth (*as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup* καταγγέλλετε, *ye openly declare, preach or ſhew forth the Lords death*, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 11. 26.) and conſequently both the Grace and Love of the Father in ſending his only begotten Son, and the Grace and Love of the Son in giving himſelf to be a Propitiatory Sacrifice for the ſins of men is publickly manifeſted, and made after a ſort viſible unto men. So by the Application of the Token of the Covenant, whether to the adult, or to Infants, the Covenant between God and them is publickly ſolemnized, and thereby his Goodneſs, Grace, and Love, in entring it with them reſpectively is openly declared, and made more conſpicuous unto men. And conſequently as God's extending his Covenant to the Infant-ſeed of his People is a further and higher expreſſion of his Goodneſs and Love, than his entring it only with themſelves; ſo by the Application of the Token to them there is a further manifeſtation of that his Goodneſs Grace and Love made unto them: and by how much the more clearly and openly any of the Attributes of God are manifeſted unto men, by ſo much

much the more meet objects they become for their acknowledgments, admiration, and adoration; and consequently such a manifestation of his Attributes hath a direct reference to his glory, and it is the duty of all men to yield him the glory of his Attributes by suitable acknowledgments, admiration, and adoration according to the manifestations he makes of them. *Oh! Sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm hath gotten him the Victory. The Lord hath made known his Salvation: his Righteousness hath he openly shewn in the sight of the Heathen,* saith the Psalmist, *Psalm.* 98. 1, 2. The full explication of this Scripture is not designed. That which alone concerns our present purpose is, the *Psalmist*'s exciting men *to sing a new song unto the Lord,* upon this ground, or for this reason, *that he hath made known his Salvation, and openly shewed his Righteousness in the sight* or before the eyes *of the Heathen*; by making known his Salvation he hath openly shewn his Righteousness. The more visible God makes any of his Attributes unto men, be the way or means by which he doth it what they will, the more is he to be praised, admired, and adored by them: So *Rev.* 15. 3, 4. when God hath executed judgments upon *Babylon*, the blessed Assembly of Victors over the Beast are brought in as singing the song of *Moses*, and the song of the Lamb, part of which is, *Who shall not fear thee O Lord and glorifie thy Name*? as if he should say, surely every one would do it; or oh how great is the stupidity of men that they do not do it? And what is the matter? why should men

Accusant Mundi stuporem, quod considerationè mirabilium Dei operum ad eum timendum & glorificandum non permoventur.

fear,

fear God and glorify his Name now rather, or more than formerly? They give the reaſon. *Thy Judgments*, and conſequently thy Juſtice, Holineſs, and Power in the execution of them *are manifeſt*. The more viſible God makes his Attributes, the more he is to be glorified by men, and the more inexcuſable is their ſtupidity in caſe of failure therein. Now I ſay by the Solemnization of the Covenant, as extended to, and entred with the Seed of Believers, by the Application of the Token thereof unto them, the Goodneſs, Grace, and Love of God is made more manifeſt, or is openly ſhewn in the ſight, or before the eyes of men, and conſequently hath a peculiar ſubſerviency to his glory. And let it be farther obſerved, that as God's extending his Covenant to, and entring it with the Infant-ſeed of his People is an expreſſion of greater Goodneſs, Grace, and Love, than the entring it with the Parents alone would have been; ſo there is ſomewhat in that his extending his Covenant to Infants for the Illuſtration and Manifeſtation of the riches, and freeneſs of his Goodneſs, Grace, and Love, beyond what there is in his entring it with Parents, or any adult perſons whatſoever. But of that more hereafter.

2. Hereby the Soveraign Headſhip of our Lord Chriſt is publickly owned, and practically acknowledged by Parents, who in obedience to his revealed Will have the Token of the Covenant applyed to their Seed, and that two ways.

1. By the ſolemn and viſible dedication of theirs unto him, and entring them as Subjects of his Kingdom. The Apoſtle tells us *that for this end Chriſt both died, and roſe and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living*, Rom. 4. 9. As the Father

ther hath given him an Universal Headship over all Creatures; so he hath acquired the actual exercise thereof by his Death and Resurrection. Now as the adult by receiving the Token of the Covenant, and dedicating themselves thereby unto Christ as his Subjects and Servants do publickly own, and practically acknowledg his Headship over themselves; so by having the Token of the Covenant applyed unto theirs, and dedicating them unto Christ thereby, and entring them as joynt Subjects of his Kingdom, they alike own and acknowledg his Headship over theirs, and consequently openly own and acknowledge the Universal Headship of Christ. They have only an absolute power over, and right to dedicate themselves and theirs, who, as the Apostle speaks, *are ὁι αὐτῶν, theirs, or of them*, unto Christ and unto God in him. And hence they go to the utmost bounds of that power and right that God in Nature, or his Word hath invested them with, in their endeavours to promote, and propogate the Headship of Christ over all. Now thus publickly to own, and practically to acknowledg the Soveraign and Universal Headship of Christ greatly redounds not only to the glory of Chist as Mediator, but to the glory of God the Father. *God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name above every name, that every tongue should confess that Jesus is the Lord to the glory of God the Father*, Phil. 2. 9, 11. And let me say, hath our Lord Christ deserved so ill at their hands, whom he hath redeemed with no less price than his own precious Blood, that they should grudg him his Universal Headship, or should refuse to dedicate them up to him, and enter them as Subjects of his Kingdom,

whom

whom God and Nature hath inveſted with a power and right ſo to do.

2. By a ſolemn dedicating of their Infants unto Chriſt, and entring them as Subjects of his Kingdom, by a Right or Ceremony of his own Inſtitution, they do viſibly own, and practically acknowledg his Headſhip over his own Houſe or Kingdom, as Lord and Law-giver thereof, which again greatly redounds as to his, ſo to his Father's glory. The Apoſtle inforceth his exhortation to Liberality to the Poor by this argument, *that they*, viz. the poor *would glorifie God for their profeſſed ſubjection to the Goſpel of Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 9. 13. A practical profeſſion of our ſubjection to the Goſpel of Chriſt, or to the Laws and Ordinances of his Kingdom, redounds more to his and his Father's glory then a mere verbal profeſſion doth. A verbal profeſſion may be without the belief of the heart, but practice evidenceth a real belief of what is profeſſed in words. And as by realizing our belief of his Soveraignty and Headſhip over his Church, we do our ſelves more immediatly honour and glorifie Chriſt; ſo others will be provokt and ſtirred up to glorifie God for that our profeſſed ſubjection to his Goſpel. And here let it be obſerved, that as in practice to ſubmit to any Command and Ordinance of Chriſt is ſo far an owning and acknowledging of his Headſhip and Soveraignty: ſo by how much the more purely ſuch a Command or Ordinance proceeds from his ſoveraign will and pleaſure, by ſo much the more full and apparent is our owning and acknowledging of his abſolute Soveraignty. Hence in as much as poſitive commands (and ſuch is that concerning the Application of the Token of the Covenant) do more eſpecially proceed from the ſoveraign will and plea-

ſure

ſure of Chriſt, we by our profeſſed ſubjection unto them do eminently own and acknowledg that his abſolute ſoveraignty.

On which account it ſeems to be (a thing not unworthy our obſervation,) that all more eſpecial probations, or trials of men have been made by ſome poſitive command. And yet further, ſome Laws and Ordinances of this kind (at leaſt *quoad nos*,) proceed more purely and abſolutely from the mere ſoveraign will and pleaſure of Chriſt then others do. Some have the reaſon, yea (*conſideratis conſiderandis*) neceſſity of their Inſtitution ingraven in legible Characters upon them, and men by a little uſe and exerciſe of their own reaſon may be convinced of the neceſſity of ſubmitting to them, in order to their enjoying the good conveyed by them; and anſwerably may ſubmit rather out of ſelf-love, then from a ſence of the ſoveraignty of Chriſt; whence their ſubmitting to them is not ſo evident an acknowledgment of his Soveraignty. But now others, however alike rational, and neceſſary in themſelves, yet their rationality and neceſſarineſs lies more remote from ordinary obſervation, yea may poſſibly ſeem (at leaſt to many) to be if not irratioual, yet uſeleſs and unneceſſary. Yea it muſt be further obſerved in reſpect of moſt, if not all Laws of this kind, (*viz.* Poſitive Laws,) though ſatisfactory reaſon of their inſtitution may be aſſigned, yet ſomewhat of ſoveraign will and pleaſure muſt be owned as the original ground of their inſtitution. And this is neceſſary, that as men beholding their rationality, and ſeeing how they are adapted and ſuited to that end whereunto they are ordained, ſhould admire the wiſdom that appears in them; ſo being *non-pluſt* in their enquiries after the full reaſon of them,

ſhould

ſhould yield unto Chriſt the honour of his ſoveraignty by a ready ſubmiſſion to that, the full reaſon of the inſtitution of which muſt be reſolved into his Soveraign will and pleaſure, who is the ſupreme *Ruler in Jacob.* An inſtance hereof we have in this Command, requiring the Application of the Token of the Covenant, eſpecially as theſe particular rights, Circumciſion of old and Baptiſm now was and is the Token, and Infants were, and are the Subjects to whom the one was, and the other is to be applyed; for though a ſatisfactory account of theſe particular rights being appointed, and of the Application of the one and the other to Infants as Confederates with their Parents may be given, yet the command muſt be granted to carry no obſcure impreſſions of abſolute ſoveraignty; After our utmoſt enquiries after the reaſons either of ſuch rights being inſtituted, or of their Application to Infants, we muſt leave ſomewhat to abſolute Soveraignty. And anſwerably Parents by dedicating their Infant-ſeed unto Chriſt, and entring them as Subjects of his Kingdom, by ſuch a particular Right or Ceremonie, as they openly own, and practically acknowledg his Headſhip over his own Houſe in common with their ſubjection to any other of his Commands; ſo in a ſpecial manner they own and acknowledg the abſolutneſs of that his Soveraign Headſhip, that his alone will and pleaſure inſtamps ſuch Authority on his Commands, as that on the ſole account thereof all men ought to ſubmit, and yield cheerful obedience unto them. By our chearful and ready obedience to ſuch commands, as we eminently evidence our own ſincerity, ſo we both glorifie Chriſt as Mediator, and God the Father who hath put all power into his hand.

3. Hereby

3. Hereby Parents give a publick commendatory Teſtimony to the Covenant of Grace, they openly teſtifie their approbation and liking of it, they practically profeſs their high value of it, they declare their willingneſs that their Children ſhould come under the bond of it, and that they ſhould enjoy the good promiſed upon the terms required in it, and conſequently that it is a great good, and advantage unto men to enjoy that good upon thoſe terms. Now that is a great commendation to the Covenant, and doth redound to the glory of God eſtabliſhing of it. As in caſe a man hath had a leaſe of a Manor or Farm during his life, and when he grows old, and comes to die, he is willing and deſirous his ſon ſhould have the leaſe renewed to him, and that upon the ſame terms and conditions himſelf had poſſeſſed it, he thereby gives a commendatory Teſtimony to his leaſe. So when a Believer ſhall put his Children under the bond of the Covenant, and do what in him lies to intereſt them in the good contained in it, and that upon the terms and conditions himſelf hath enjoyed that good, he thereby commends the Covenant, and openly declares its worthineſs of all acceptation. It was no little commendation to the ſervice of God, for *Joſhua* to make that publick profeſſion, that whatſoever choice the people ſhould make as to the God they would ſerve, yet not himſelf only would, but *his houſe ſhould ſerve the Lord*, Joſh. 24. 15. *As for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord.* He would not only continue in his ſervice himſelf, but he would do what in him lay to oblige his Children to the ſervice of the ſame God. Now this did greatly commend the ſervice of God to the people, hence we ſee what an influence it had upon them, how reſol-

vedly

edly they expreſs themſelves: *Then the people anſwered, and ſaid, God forbid that we ſhould forſake the Lord to ſerve other gods.* When people are not only reſolvedly ſteadfaſt to the ſervice of God themſelves, but are willing and deſirous that their Children ſhould, and anſwerably uſe their utmoſt endeavours that they may ingage with them in the ſame Service, 'tis a high commendation to the Service of God. So when Parents ſhall enter their Children into, and bring them under the bond of that Covenant, which themſelves have already taken hold of, it is a very great commendation to the Covenant; they thereby publickly ſhew their approbation and value of it. Before I paſs this, let me only ſay to thoſe who do ſo zealouſly oppoſe their Childrens intereſt in the Covenant, and reject the Token, by the Application of which God hath ordained they ſhould be brought under the bond of it, as the Lord ſaid to his People of old, when they apoſtatized from him, *what iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me?* Jer. 2. 5. So let me ſay, what iniquity have you found in God, that you ſhould be ſo averſe to your Childrens being brought nigh unto him? What iniquity have you found in his Covenant, that you are ſo willing that the Entail of it to your Children ſhould be cut off? Surely it may well diſcourage Sinners from taking hold of the Covenant, when you, that profeſs your ſelves to underſtand it, ſhall put ſo low a value upon it, and ſhall account Intereſt in it ſuch an indifferent thing; yea ſhould ſeem to be ſo averſe to yours having an intereſt in it. Is the Good promiſed ſo ſmall? or are the Terms required ſo hard and difficult, as that the Good is not worth having upon thoſe Terms? Alas! that Profeſſors ſhould un-

derſtand the Covenant no better. I doubt not but many Parents, that now in their darkneſs reject, yea diſpute againſt their Childrens intereſt in the Covenant, and deride their Baptiſm, would go through Fire and Water, as we ſay, that they might enjoy the one and the other, did they but fully underſtand of what benefit and advantage they would be unto them: But now through their miſguided zeal they greatly reflect upon the Covenant, and conſequently upon God the Author of it: whereas Parents by bringing their Children under the bond of it, by the Application of the Token to them do give a publick commendation of it, and thereby honour and glorify God as extending it to them.

4. Hereby Parents do publickly own, and practically acknowledg their belief of ſuch things, which for men profeſſedly to believe, own, and acknowledg doth greatly redound to the glory of God.

I ſhall only inſtance in ſuch things as more eſpecially are owned and acknowledged by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to Infants, Thus.

1. They publickly own and practically profeſs their belief of the Doctrine of Original ſin, that there is indeed ſuch a thing as Original ſin communicated from *Adam* to all his poſterity, and that by means thereof all men by Nature are Children of Wrath. As Circumciſion of old, ſo Baptiſm now hath a ſpecial reference to Original ſin, eſpecially as Infants were and are the Subjects of the one and of the other. And the very Application of the one and the other to them doth preſuppoſe them under the guilt of it; and conſequently Parents by having the Token of the Covenant applyed to their Infants do publickly own, and practically profeſs their belief, that though they have

have not, as the Apostle speaks *Rom.* 5. 14. *sinned* ἐπὶ τὸ ὁμοιώματι, *after* or according *to the similitude of* Adam's *transgression*, that is actually in the external violation of any precept of the Law, yet are subject to the curse of the Law and Wrath of God? Now for men publickly to own, and visibly to profess their belief of this Doctrine greatly redounds to the glory of God. Their guiltiness of that sin justifies him in all penal evils he lays upon them. What sad complaints have some Heathens made concerning Man's birth, and the variety of Miseries attending him, above what attend other Creatures, and thereby greatly reflected upon God his Creator, as though he had not been so good to Man, as to other Creatures, and this from their ignorance of the Doctrine of Original sin? They evidently perceived the sad fruits and effects of Original sin, but knew not Original sin as the cause of those effects. But now by owning and professing our belief of this Doctrine we do implicitly justifie God in all the miseries he hath subjected men unto, which must needs greatly redound to his honour and glory.

2. They do hereby publickly own, and practically profess their belief of the Doctrine of free Grace. It's sufficiently evident that Infants in their pure Infant-state are incapable of Merit, what God doth for them, he must needs do freely. Saith the Apostle, speaking of the difference that God put between *Jacob* and *Esau* in respect of Election and Preteritron, and his consequent dealings with them respectively, *the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her*, viz. Rebekah, *the elder shall serve*

the younger, Rom. 9. 11, 12. That which I only design from these words is, to shew that what God doth for Infants, either in regard of Election before time, or actual Donation in time, he doth it not for or according to the Merit or desert of works, but freely of his own good pleasure, either merely of his Grace and good pleasure as in respect of Election, or of his mere Grace and good pleasure through the interposal of the mediation of Christ as in respect of actual Donation. If he should do what he doth for them of works, that is for, or according to the Merit or desert of works, it must be either the works of the Infants themselves, or the works of their Parents; not the works of Infants themselves, for they have neither done any good or evil; not the works of their Parents, that appears from the difference he puts in his love and hatred, as the Apostle speaks between Children begotten, conceived, and born, not only from the same Parents, but at one and the same time, as in the case of Twins. If he deal with Children according to the deserts of Parents, he would deal alike with all Children that are so begotten, conceived, and born: So that what God doth for Infants cannot be of works, neither of Parents, nor Children, but must be wholly free, of his mere Grace and goodness through the Mediation of Christ.

Vigilantissime ait ex uno concubitu, gemini enim concepti erant, ne vel paternis meritis tribueretur. Si quisquam forte diceret, ideo talis natus est filius, quia pater ita erat affectus illo tempore cum serit in utero matris, aut erat ita mater affecta cum concepit, simul enim ambo sunt uno tempore concepti. Austin *referente* Bedâ *ex Epistolâ ad Simpl.*

3. Hereby they publickly own, and practically profess their faith in, and belief of the Truth, Faithfulness,

neſs, and Power of God, his Truth and Faithfulneſs in his Word whether of threatning or promiſe, his Power as to accompliſh his Word, ſo to bleſs and make effectual his own Inſtitutions for that end whereunto they are appointed. Chriſt is the only refuge for faln man to betake himſelf to for ſecurity from the wrath to come, and the way, whereby man betakes himſelf to this refuge, is by taking hold of the Covenant, and thereby getting under the promiſes of it made in Chriſt. Hence as by Baptiſm perſons are viſibly admitted into the Covenant, and that their admiſſion is ſolemnized by coming unto Baptiſm, they are ſaid *to flee from the wrath to come*, Mat. 3. 7. Saith *John Baptiſt* to the Phariſees and Sadducees coming to his Baptiſm, *who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* Baptiſm is a viſible incorporation of Perſons into Chriſt, and ſolemnization of their Covenant-relation with God in him, by means whereof they viſibly come under the ſhadow of his wings, and under the promiſes made in him, whereby they are ſecured from the wrath to come: And Parents by taking hold of the Covenant for their Children, and ſolemnly dedicating them unto God in Chriſt, by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them, bring them under the ſame refuge with themſelves, they carry them along with them into this refuge from the wrath to come. Now as this proceeds from, ſo it is a viſible and practical profeſſion of their Faith, (I mean in reſpect of ſuch who do indeed act from true principles, as all believers are ſuppoſed to do,) that they do believe the threatnings denouncing wrath againſt man as faln and guilty of ſin; ſo that the Promiſes made in Chriſt are true and faithful, as alſo that God is able to bleſs and make

effectual his own Inſtitutions to thoſe ends and purpoſes they are appointed to in ſubſerviency to mans freedom from that wrath. If Parents did not believe their Children were under the guilt of ſin, and the threatnings declaring and denouncing Wrath againſt them, as under that guilt, why ſhould they put them under the Wings of Chriſt by a ſolemn dedication of them to him for the ſecuring them from Wrath? And if they did not believe Chriſt to be a ſure Refuge, and that the Promiſes in him are true and faithful, to what purpoſe ſhould they put them under his Wings, or carry them under the Covert of the Promiſes? And if they did not believe that the Application of the Token of the Covenant was appointed in ſome kind of ſubſerviency to their freedom from Wrath, at leaſt as growing up unto years of Maturity, and that God is able to bleſs and make effectual that Inſtitution for the uſe and end he hath appointed it, why ſhould they mind it, or take any care about it? Who will flee himſelf, or carry his Children to a Refuge, unleſs he apprehend ſome danger? who will make that a Refuge to himſelf or his, that he apprehends not ſafety in? who will take any courſe for the ſecuring himſelf or his under any refuge, that he doth not apprehend will be effectual for that end? Hence I ſay Parents by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to their Seed do viſibly and practically profeſs their Faith in, and Belief of the Truth, Faithfulneſs and Power of God. It is ſaid of *Moſes*, Heb. 11. 28. *Through Faith he kept the Paſſover, and the ſprinkling of Blood, leſt he that deſtroyed the firſt-born ſhould touch them*; believing the threatnings denounced againſt *Egypt* concerning the deſtruction of their firſt-born, and believing the promiſes made

made to themſelves concerning their own freedom from that Plague, upon their ſprinkling the blood of the Paſchal Lamb upon the poſts of their doors, he keeps the Paſsover, and ſprinkleth, or takes care that the blood of the Paſchal Lamb be ſprinkled upon their door poſts accordingly. And as he did this through Faith, ſo his doing it was a viſible and practical profeſſion of his Faith, *Pari fide & nobis circa Sacramenta eſt opus*, ſaith *Pareus*. As there is a need of the like Faith, ſo the like Faith is viſibly and practically profeſſed by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to the Seed of Believers, and this greatly redounds to the glory of God. This is mentioned as a peculiar diſcovery of the excellency of *Moſes* his Faith, implying that much, or as our Lord Chriſt ſpeaks, *a great Faith* is required unto, and diſcovered by his obſervation of that Inſtitution. And let me ſay, did Parents act in the Application of the Token of the Covenant to their Infant-ſeed from ſo pure a Principle of Faith as they ought to do, and did they act their Faith as they ought with reference to the Token as applyed to them, their Faith would be found to have a very excellency in it, they might be well renowned for the excellency of their Faith. Now at the greater rate of excellency Faith acts, the more is God honoured and glorified thereby, ſee *Rom* 4.19,and 20. From what hath been ſaid we may evidently ſee what a direct, yea how great a reference the Application of the Token of the Covenant to the Infant-ſeed of Believers hath to the glory of God, and from that reference it hath to his glory it is in part that he requires it.

3. The third and laſt reaſon of this Inſtitution reſpecting God may be its reference and ſubſerviency

to the ſupportation and inlargement of the Kingdom of his Son Jeſus Chriſt. The ſupportation and inlargement of the Kingdom of our Lord Chriſt here in the World is greatly ſubſerved hereby. Look for what end and purpoſe the Covenant was extended to the Seed both of *Abraham*, and of all his Spiritual Seed, with reference, and in ſubſerviency to the ſame ends and purpoſes is the Token of the Covenant to be applyed to them. Now one end of the extenſiveneſs of the Covenant is the multiplication of the Seed of *Abraham* in order to the ſupportation and inlargement of the Kingdom of Chriſt, and anſwerably the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them hath a direct reference and ſubſerviency to that end. What reference and ſubſerviency it hath to that end will appear more hereafter. But let that ſuffice for the firſt Head of Reaſons of God's appointing the Token of the Covenant to be applyed unto the Infant-ſeed of his People, *viz.* Such as reſpect God himſelf.

See Mr. *Carter* his *Abraham's* Covenant opened. pag. 36. and ſo on.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The Reaſons of God's ordaining the Application of the Token of the Covenant to the Infant-ſeed of his People reſpecting the Parent from three Reaſons now aſſigned. 1. *The advantages ariſing therefrom to their Faith. How greatly their Faith is advantaged thereby ſhewed.* 2. *It is for the advantage of their Joy and Comfort in their Children.* 3. *It is that God may thereby lay greater Obligations upon them to endeavour the Converſion of their Children and their Perſonal Embracement of the Covenant as growing up to years of Maturity. The variety of Obligations lying upon Pædo-Baptiſts ſo to do above what Anti-Pædo-Baptiſts can apprehend themſelves to ly under opened. How much greater ground of hope for ſucceſs in their endeavours Pædo-Baptiſts have, than Anti-Pedo-Baptiſts aceording to their Principle can have, ſhewed. The third Head of Reaſons,* viz. *Such as reſpect the Seed of Believers mentioned.*

THe ſecond Head of Reaſons, *viz.* Such as reſpect the Parents, to whoſe Seed the Token is to be applyed, and thus theſe four Reaſons lie obvious.

1. Firſt

1. First it is for the advantge of their Faith to be acted with reference to their Seed; by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to their Seed, they have a visible Ratification and Confirmation of the Covenant and Promises thereof, as extended and made to them. And that we may more fully discover what advantage the Application of the Token of the Covenant to the Seed of Believers is to their Faith to be acted with reference to them, we may observe that the Promises of the Covenant respecting the Seed of Believers are considerable two wayes.

1. The Promises respecting the Seed of Believers are made to Parents with reference to, and on the behalf of their Seed.

2. They are made to the Seed themselves as descended from such Parents.

1. The Promises respecting the Seed of Believers are firstly and primarily made to their Parents, and are particular branches of the Covenant established with them. The Covenant consists in more Promises than one, or is comprehensive of several distinct Promises, some of which only concern Believers themselves, or contain some good to be enjoyed only by themselves in their own persons; other respect theirs, though the Promises are firstly made to them, yet the good contained in them redounds to and is injoyed by theirs. Thus when God promiseth to be a God to *Abraham*'s Seed after him, the promise is first made to *Abraham* himself, though the good contained therein redound to, and is injoyed by his Seed. And the same is true of the Promises as continued to Believers, they are firstly made to Parents. Saith God concerning *Abraham*, *I know him, that he will command his children and his houshold after him, and they shall keep*

the

the way of the Lord to do Judgment and Juſtice, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham *that which he hath ſpoken of him,* that is, that which he hath promiſed to him, *Gen.* 18. 19. Now what was it that God had ſpoken of or promiſed to *Abraham*? why not only that he would be a God to him as perſonally conſidered, but a God to his Seed or Houſhold after him, and would give unto them the Land of *Canaan* for an everlaſting Poſſeſſion. This twofold good of God's being a God to his Seed, and giving them the Land of *Canaan* for an everlaſting Poſſeſſion, though injoyed by his Seed, yet was firſtly promiſed to him with reference to, and on their behalf. Children ſtand at ſo little a diſtance from Parents, that they are ſaid to be the Parents themſelves multiplyed. Parents do after a ſort ſubſiſt in their Children, and anſwerably the good or evil of Children is accounted both in Scripture, and according to the dictates of Nature, the good or evil of their Parents. *Have mercy upon me,* ſaith the *Syrophenician,* when ſhe came to Chriſt for cure for her afflicted Daughter, *Matth.* 15. 22. She accounts her Daughter's affliction her own, and the Daughter's cure would be the Mother's Mercy. Hence promiſes of good to, and threatnings of evil againſt Children are frequently firſtly made to, or denounced againſt the Parents themſelves as a good or evil unto them. So here the Promiſes of the Covenant reſpecting the Seed are particular and diſtinct branches of the Covenant as eſtabliſhed with Believers themſelves: But

2. Theſe Promiſes may be conſidered as made to the Seed, they are not made only to their Parents, but alſo to their Seed with them, and hence Parents and Childaen are to be lookt upon as Joynt-Confederates

rates with God. Hence ſaith the Lord to *Abraham*: *I will eſtabliſh my Covenant between me and thee, and thy Seed after thee, in their Generations*, Gen. 17. 7. The Covenant was eſtabliſhed with *Abraham*'s Seed, as well with *Abraham* himſelf, and Seed here includes his immediate Children as well as mediate; and hence again the Promiſe is ſaid to be to the Children of Believers as well as to Believers themſelves. *The Promiſe is to you and to your Children*, Acts 2. 39. And Children, as they grow up to years of maturity, may and ought to lay claim to the Promiſes as made to themſelves as well as made to their Parents on their behalf. Now according to this twofold conſideration of the Promiſes of the Covenant, there is a twofold uſe and end of the Application of the Token of the Covenant to the Seed of Believers.

1. Thereby that part of the Covenant entred with Parents reſpecting their Seed is ratified, ſealed, and confirmed to the Parents. Hence in *Gen.* 17. 10. ſaith the Lord, *This is my Covenant, which ye ſhall keep between me and you, and thy Seed after thee, every Man-child among you ſhall be circumciſed. You*, in the former part of the Verſe intends both *Abraham* and his Seed as diſtinguiſhed from his and their reſpective Natural Children. This is ſaid to be the Covenant that they ſhould keep between God and them, *viz.* that every Man-child among them ſhould be circumciſed. Hence it is evident that the Circumciſion of their Male children was the Covenant to be kept by them. And how was the Circumciſion of their Children ſaid to be the Covenant between God and them, to be kept by them? why partly as that is in part the reſtipulation of the Covenant required on their part, and partly as it is the Ratification, and Confirmation

Confirmation of the Covenant made with them, *viz.* that part of the Covenant reſpecting their Seed: ſo that Circumciſion of their Male children was in part their duty, or a part of the reſtipulation to be performed by them, and alſo a confirmation of the Promiſes (*viz.* thoſe reſpecting their Seed) made unto them. And what is here ſaid of Circumciſion, is true of Baptiſm, in as much as Circumciſion is here ſpoken of as conſidered under that general notion, *viz.* the Token of the Covenant. And what is ſpoken of Circumciſion as conſidered in that general notion is alike applicable to Baptiſm: It ſucceeds Circumciſion in that notion, and there is a very great aptneſs and fitneſs in the Application of the Token of the Covenant to the Seed, to ſeal and confirm unto Believers this part of the Covenant entred with them on the behalf, or with reſpect to their Seed, when God ſhall add to his Promiſes a Token to be applyed not only to Believers themſelves, but to their Seed, that muſt needs have a very great aptneſs and fitneſs further to confirm and eſtabliſh the Promiſes to them reſpecting their Seed. And a twofold reaſon may be aſſigned of Gods ratifying and confirming to Believers this part or branch of the Covenant reſpecting their Seed by the Application of the Sign or Token of the Covenant to them.

1. That the Sign or Token of the Covenant might be proportionable to the Covenant, of which it is the Sign or Token.

The Covenant entred with Believers conſiſts (as I have ſaid) in two branches. The firſt reſpects themſelves; The ſecond their Seed. Now the Sign or Token as applyed only to themſelves, though it is true, it doth ratifie and confirm the whole Covenant,

yet

yet it hath a peculiar reſpect to that branch reſpecting themſelves. There is nothing in the Token as applyed to themſelves ſignifying their being bleſſings to their Seed, and conſequently that branch of the Covenant would not have been confirmed, at leaſt ſo expreſsly and clearly as was neceſſary for the help and advantage of their Faith, by the ſole Application of the Token to themſelves, becauſe then the Token had not been fully proportionate to the Covenant. Hence that the Token might be proportionate to the Covenant, and anſwerably more fully advantageous to the Faith of Believers, God hath ordained the Application of it to the Seed as well as to the Parents themſelves.

2. The great addition, that by theſe Promiſes of the Covenant reſpecting their Seed is made to the good of the Covenant, ſeems to make ſuch a ſuperadditional confirmation neceſſary. So great an addition is made to the good of the Covenant as entred with Parents by the extenſion of it to their Seed, that the Promiſes might have even *non-pluſt* their Faith, had not this ſuperadditional confirmation been given. Wee ſee how *David* ſtands even amazed as not knowing what to ſay, when he not only reviews what God had already done for him, but conſiders the Promiſe further made to his Houſe for ſo long a time to come, 2 *Sam.*7.18,19. So for God not only to promiſe to be a God to Believers themſelves, but to make their Children, and that as ſuch, Fellow-heirs with them of the ſame Promiſe, might have even *non-pluſt* their Faith, had he not expreſsly ratified and confirmed that branch by the Application of the Token to their Seed. The glory of the Covenant might have overcome a weak Faith, had it not been ſutably confirmed. But

2. The other end and uſe of the Application of the Token

Token of the Covenant to the Seed of Believers is the ratification and confirmatiou of the Promiſes as made unto them, and conſequently for the more full ſecuring of the good promiſed to them, and it ought to be ſo lookt upon, and improved by them as they grow up to years of Maturity, of which more hereafter.

Now then to bring what hath been ſaid to our preſent purpoſe; we may ſee what advantage Believers have to their Faith, as to be acted with reference to their Seed, or the good promiſed to them, by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them; they have not only that part of the Covenant reſpecting their Seed ratified and confirmed to themſelves, but they alſo ſee the Covenant as entred with, and the Promiſes as made to their Seed ratified and confirmed unto them: How far Faith is to be acted by Parents with reference to their Seed will appear, when we conſider what Promiſes are made unto them, with the good contained in them, and conſequently conveyed to and ſetled upon them by thoſe Promiſes. But how far, or in what Sence ſoever Faith is to be acted, we ſee Believers have no little advantage for it. By the Application of the Token of the Covenant to their Seed they have not only the Promiſes as made to themſelves with reference to their Seed confirmed to themſelves, but thoſe Promiſes as made to their Seed confirmed unto them.

2. Another reaſon may be, that God hereby might provide for, and lay a ſure foundation unto the joy and comfort of his People in their Children, according to what Faith Believers can act with reference to their Children, and the advantage they have to that their Faith, ſo will their joy and comfort in them be. Children are great Bleſſings, choice Mercies, and peculiar

peculiar Comforts unto Men: We ſee how *Jacob* looks upon the gift of Children; he accounts it a gracious Gift, when *Eſau* ſeeing his Wives and Children puts the queſtion, Who are theſe? ſaith he, *They are the Children, that God hath graciouſly given me*, Gen. 32. 5. He accounts his children as an effect of great Grace and Mercy to him: So our Lord Chriſt tells us; *a Woman when ſhe is in travel hath ſorrow, becauſe her hour is come; but when ſhe is delivered of a Child, ſhe remembers no more her anguiſh for joy that a Man is born into the World*, John 16. 21. The joy that a Man is born ſwallows up the remembrance of her ſorrows: Children are Parents joys and comforts. But now were it ſo indeed that Infants (I mean ſuch as are born of believing Parents) have no intereſt in the Covenant, nor any ſecurity thereby from the dreadful effects of their natural ſtates and conditions, the apprehenſion and conſideration of what their ſtates and conditions are, muſt needs greatly allay, if not utterly deſtroy the joy and comfort of Parents in them: For Parents to ſee the fruit of their bodies is matter of joy, but when they reflect upon their Natural conditions, and remember they are Children of Wrath, this muſt needs greatly weaken, or rather utterly deſtroy that joy. And it is no little matter of admiration, how any, that know and believe the Scriptures declaring, how the whole race of Mankind are involved in the guilt of *Adams* ſin as being virtually and ſeminally in him, as alſo how humane Nature is vitiated and corrupted with ſin, and ſo propagated from Parents to Children, and conſequently how all as born into the World are guilty before God, and children of Wrath: I ſay, how any, that know and believe theſe things, can have

any

any joy, or take any comfort in their Children, unleſs they have ſome hope, that through the Covenant of Grace they are freed from the guilt, and under at leaſt a probability of ſecurity from the dreadful effects of that their ſtate. As for that ſuppoſition of ſome, that only Natural death was threatned againſt *Adam* in caſe of ſin, and conſequently that no other kind of death is come upon all Mankind through his fall, and hereupon that that is the only kind of death that Infants are ſubject to: Or that ſuppoſition of others, that the guilt of Original ſin is wholly *de facto* taken away from all Mankind by Chriſt, and conſequently that all are born in a ſtate of Peace with God, and under the ſame Love, and Favour that *Adam* was under in his ſtate of Innocency; what relief ſoever the one or the other yields, can only ariſe from the darkneſs and errour of the underſtanding and judgment, having no true foundation in the Word of God; neither, were they granted, would they contribute in the leaſt degree ſo much to the joy and comfort of Parents in their Children, as the Covenant if truly underſtood will do. And as for thoſe which fetch their relief from the Doctrine of Election, though that Doctrine be certainly true, and may be improved as a conſiderable relief againſt that ſorrow and grief, that muſt rationally ariſe to believing Parents from the apprehenſion of the natural ſtates and conditions of their Children; yet I doubt, if all things be well weighed, it will be found greatly wanting as to the yielding that plenary relief that it hath been uſually endeavoured to be improved unto; in as much as Election neither ſecures any from death in their Infant-ſtate, nor can be looked upon according to any Scripture-ground as a ſecurity againſt

the dreadful effects of that ſtate and condition, in caſe of death in that ſtate: However this ſeems evident, that the relief to be fetcht from thence is alike to unbelievers with reſpect to their Children as to Believers with reſpect to theirs. Set aſide intereſt in the Covenant and the Promiſes thereof, and a Believer hath no more aſſurance from Scripture that his Seed belongs to the Election of Grace, than any other man hath; or ſuppoſe he ſhould, yet that ſuch as die in their Infancy do belong thereunto, he hath rather ground to fear than to hope: yea the ground he hath to fear they do not is vaſtly greater, than the ground he hath to hope that they do. And for Believers to have a clearer knowledg and apprehenſion of the loſt eſtate of their Children as born Children of Wrath than others have, and yet to have no other ground of hope concerning them than others have, muſt needs greatly allay their comfort and joy in them; yea they muſt rationally have leſs joy and take leſs comfort in their Children, than others have or do take in theirs. But now the Covenant as entred with Believers, extending to, and taking in their Children with them, and that as ſealed and confirmed by an outward and viſible Sign or Token both to them and their Seed, is a precious ground of hope to them concerning their Children, and may, if not wholly, yet in a great meaſure relieve them under that ſorrow and grief that otherwiſe would ariſe from the conſideration of their loſt ſtate by Nature. Now they may rationally rejoyce and take comfort in them, as will appear more fully hereafter. To have had a bare promiſe belonging to their Children would have conduced greatly to their comfort and joy in them; but to have the Promiſes confirmed, and that ſuch various ways, muſt needs greatly further

ther their joy and comfort. And God is willing that his People should have the full joy and comfort of the Mercies and Blessings he gives them, and in particular of their Children, they being to be reckoned among the choisest of those Mercies and Blessings. This made *Isaac* and *Jacob*, the one his own child, the other his grand-child, so great comforts to *Abraham*, viz. that he could look upon them *as Heirs with him of the same Promise*. Could Parents only look upon their Children as children of Wrath, alas! what comfort or joy could they take in them? But now seeing them Heirs of the same Promises with themselves, and these Promises alike sealed and confirmed to them as to themselves, now they may rationally rejoyce and take comfort in them; and that may be one reason why God hath not only extended his Covenant, but appointed the Application of the Token thereof to them, that they may have solid comfort and joy in them.

3. God may have appointed the Application of the Token of the Covenant to the Infant-seed of his People, that he might thereby lay a greater obligation upon them, and more effectually provoke them to a diligent use of all those means, and a vigorous performance of all those duties himself hath directed them to, subservient to their Childrens embracement of the Covenant, and giving themselves up to him according to the tenour thereof, as they grow up to years of maturity. The multiplication of the Seed of *Abraham*, and thereby the supporration and increase of the Kingdom of Christ, the reduction of fain Man from the power of sin and Satan unto himself, and thereby delivering them from the Wrath to come, and bringing them to eternal happiness and blessedness to the

praiſe of his own Grace; are the great ends of God both in extending the Covenant to the Seed of his People, and ordaining the Application of the Token thereof unto them; the attainment of all which ends is greatly ſubſerved by the Application of the Token of the Covenant, as thereby Parents become under a greater obligation to bring them up (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* This I ſhall the rather inſiſt upon, becauſe the late Author, whoſe Treatiſe hath been afore examined, hath ſeen meet (upon what grounds he declares not) to charge our Practice of Infant-Baptiſm as laying a foundation to Ignorance and Profaneneſs; though himſelf a little after (as was there obſerved) ſufficiently inſinuates, or rather plainly confeſſeth the injuſtice and unreaſonableneſs of that charge: and whether our Judgment and Practice, or our oppoſers be more juſtly chargeable with that miſchief, ſhall now (God willing) be inquired into, only premiſing theſe two things.

1. Firſt, That that cannot with any ſhew of reaſon be charged upon any Practice or Doctrine, as a miſchief attending the one or the other, which is only conſequential of ſome particular miſtakes of particular perſons owning that Doctrine, or walking in ſuch a Practice. Let it be granted, as I ſhall not deny, but ſome Pædo-Baptiſts have fain into, and maintained ſuch groſs miſtakes about the uſes and ends of Baptiſm, as have a too evident tendency to further Ignorance and Profaneneſs among thoſe that profeſs the Chriſtian Doctrine. Yet two things may be obſerved:

1. That they are only the miſtakes of ſome particular

cular men that can be juſtly charged to be of that tendency.

2. That thoſe miſtakes reſpect Baptiſm in general, and not as applyed to Infants rather then to grown perſons. And what an unrighteous charge that is, when that is imputed to the practice of Infant-Baptiſm, which may only poſſibly enſue from the miſtakes of ſome particular men, and thoſe reſpecting the Baptiſm of Infants no more then the Baptiſm of grown perſons, is obvious to all. Such Doctrines and Practices as indeed lay the ſtrongeſt obligations upon men to their duty either towards God or Man, may through the miſtakes of ſome about them ſeem not only to countenance the neglect of that duty, but be taken to give an abſolute diſcharge from it, yea to incourage to the direct contrary ſins and impieties. To give inſtances is ſuperfluous. But to charge ſuch Doctrines or Practices with the miſchief of laying a foundation to ſuch ſins and impieties, againſt which they moſt ſtrongly oblige; which only through the miſtakes of men about them, have been improved by ſome to ſuch an ill purpoſe, is moſt irrational and abſurd.

2. It muſt alſo be premiſed, that mens living in the neglect of their duty, or in ſins and impieties lying oppoſite thereunto, is no ſafe rule according to which to judge of the tendency of their avowed Judgments and Practices. Thus to make the actions or carriages of ſome owning the Doctrine and Practice of Infant-Baptiſm towards their Children the rule according to which they judge of the tendency of that Doctrine and Practice, is not only unſafe but altogether unreaſonable. 'Tis poſſible that ſome that own that Doctrine and Practice, may not underſtand how great an obligation lyes upon them thereby, to the utmoſt

care and diligence in the education of their Children. And it is alike possible that others that do understand that obligation, may greatly neglect that duty they know themselves obliged to. And let me say, I cannot but think that there are few of our opposers will be very forward to have the actions and carriages of Parents towards their Children made the *Tecmerion* or test of the soundness or unsoundness of their or our Judgment and Practice, neither will they be willing that the controversie shall be determined by that rule. It is too notorious that some have professedly declared their judgments to be against Catechizing, and the likewayes of instructing Children in the Mysteries of the Gospel, and against an authorative requiring them so much as to use and attend upon the means appointed by God for the working of Grace in the hearts of Men, as well as against the Baptism of Infants. And how evident a foundation is laid thereby to Ignorance and Profaneness is not difficult to apprehend; neither dare any of our opposers (as I suppose) affirm that the generality of Anti-Pædo-Baptists go beyond the generality of Pædo-Baptists in care and diligence in instructing their Children, or using the means subserving their conversion, and taking hold of the Covenant as they grow to years of maturity. Let us then set aside the mistakes of some, and wilful neglects of others on the one, and on the other side, and inquire whether the Doctrine and Practice maintained by us, or by them, as truly stated, may be more deservedly charged with the mischief aforementioned. And here two things offer themselves to our enquiry.

1. Whether Pædo-Baptists or Anti-Pædo-Baptists, according to their respective Judgments and Practices,

ly

ly under the greater obligations, and have the more effectual motives to provoke and ſtir them up to the diligent uſe of all means, and faithful performance of all duties ſubſerving their Childrens converſion, and perſonal embracement of the Covenant as they grow up to years of maturity.

2. Whether have they greater and ſurer ground of hope, or are under a greater probability that their uſe of means and performance of duty ſhall be effectual to the ends mentioned. That it is the duty of all men to endeavour the converſion of their Children, and uſe of all means in order thereunto, and that the ſucceſs and efficacy of all endeavours of that nature, and uſe of means for that end, depend upon the bleſſing of God, is at preſent taken for granted. Our only enquiries are, whether Parents of the one or the other perſwaſion, have the ſtronger obligations, and more effectual motives to provoke and ſtir them up to the uſe of means, and performance of their duties ſubſerving the forementioned ends, and whether have the greater ground to hope for ſucceſs therein, and conſequently whether the one or the other's uſe of means and performance of duty may be rationally concluded to be ordinarily more effectual and ſucceſsful. To begin with the

1. Firſt, Which how it ought to be reſolved will eaſily appear by a double conſideration.

1. That whatever obligations Anti-Pædo-Baptiſts can plead, or pretend themſelves to ly under, or whatever motives they can according to their judgment and practice rationally improve, to provoke and ſtir up themſelves to the diligent uſe of means, and performance of their duty in order to the converſion of their Children, the ſame obligations ly upon, and the

ſame motives may as rationally be improved by Pædo-Baptiſts for the provoking and ſtirring up themſelves to alike diligent uſe of means, and performance of their duties in order to the converſion of their Children.

I can at preſent call to mind only two things, that can with any ſhew of reaſon be pretended to ly as obligations upon, and be improved as Motives by Anti-Pædo-Baptiſts for the purpoſes mentioned beyond what confeſſedly ly upon, or may be improved by Pædo-Baptiſts. The

1. Is their profeſſed owning and acknowledging their Children as ſuch to have no intereſt in the Covenant, or right to the Token thereof. Now it may be ſaid, thoſe that profeſſedly diſclaim their Childrens having an intereſt in the Covenant, and right to the Seal thereof, and anſwerably apprehend them to be in the ſame condition with the reſt of Mankind, who are yet ſtrangers to the Covenants of Promiſe, muſt rationally be under a ſtronger obligation to endeavour their converſion, that ſo they may come regularly to an intereſt in both the Covenant, and token thereof, than thoſe who take their Children to be already in the Covenant, and anſwerably have applyed the Token of the Covenant to them. Can a man that conceives his Children to be already in Covenant with God, and hath anſwerably applyed the Token of the Covenant to them, apprehend himſelf under ſuch an obligation to inſtruct them, and uſe the means for their converſion; as a man muſt needs apprehend himſelf to be, that utterly diſclaims any preſent intereſt that they have in it, and anſwerably ſuſpends the Application of the Token to them? But to that I anſwer. It is true the judgment and practice of Anti-

Pedo-

Pedo-Baptiſts lays no ſmall obligation upon them to uſe their utmoſt endeavours after the early converſion of their Children. Thoſe that ſuppoſe their children to have no intereſt in, or benefit by the Covenant as deſcended from them, ſure are greatly concerned to uſe all means the Scriptures direct them to, whereby they may be brought into Covenant with God, through their own perſonal performance of the conditions of it themſelves. And it is well if the men of that perſwaſion would ſeriouſly conſider the obligations they are under, and how they acquit themſelves with reference thereunto. But let it be obſerved, that to endeavour the converſion of their Children, and that they do perſonally take hold of the Covenant, equally concerns Pædo-Baptiſts, as it doth Anti-Pædo-Baptiſts, though not with reference to one and the ſame end. Anti-Pædo-Baptiſts are to endeavour the converſion of their Children, and their perſonal imbracement of the Covenant, that they may come under the benefits and bleſſings of it. Pædo-Baptiſts are to endeavour the converſion of their Children, and their perſonal imbracement of the Covenant, that their Covenant-ſtate may be continued to them, and conſequently that they may enjoy the bleſſings and benefits of the Covenant. So that both are equally obliged to ſeek and endeavour their childrens perſonal imbracement of the Covenant, only the one in order to their coming into, the other in order to the continuance of their Covenant-ſtate. It's true, in the imagination of the late Author it is a contradiction to hold the Doctrine of Perſeverance, to baptize the Children of Believers, as including them in the Covenant of Grace, and yet after teach them converſion, to keep to his phraſe. But this imagination ariſeth

merely

merely from ignorance about the Covenant, as entred with the Seed of Believers. Their Covenant-ſtate ſimply and abſolutely of it ſelf infallibly ſecures not their Regeneration, or a ſaving work of Grace upon their hearts, during their pure Infant-ſtate. The condition of their Covenant-intereſt is wholly without them, *viz.* in their Parents; but as they come to years of maturity, it is devolved upon themſelves; and there is a neceſſity of a ſaving cloſe with Chriſt, and ſincere reſignation of themſelves to God in him as his, on their parts in order to the continuance of their Covenant-ſtate: which that they may do, their Parents are to endeavour in the uſe of all means God hath directed them to. And the neceſſity hereof is an equal obligation upon Parents to uſe thoſe means in order thereunto, that the neceſſity of ſuch a cloſe with Chriſt is upon thoſe who diſclaim their preſent intereſt in the Covenant, to uſe the means in order to that their cloſing in with Chriſt, that they may be brought into Covenant with God. So that I ſay both Pædo-Baptiſts and Anti-Pædo-Baptiſts are equally obliged to ſeek and endeavour the converſion of their Children, or to bring them to a ſaving perſonal cloſe with Chriſt, though the one doth it that his Children may have an intereſt in the Covenant, which before he apprehended them to want: the other that their Children may be continued in Covenant, and anſwerably injoy the full benefits and bleſſings of it. That which ſo ſtrongly obligeth Parents to endeavour their Childrens intereſt in the Covenant, is their injoyments of the benefits and bleſſings of it; and continuance in Covenant is of equal neceſſity unto that, as the firſt admiſſion into it is. Hence the obligation in the general is one and the ſame on all

Parents,

Parents, be their judgments for or againſt their Childrens intereſt in the Covenant, and right to the Sign and Token of it, to endeavour, and anſwerably uſe all means in order to their Childrens converſion, and ſaving cloſe with Chriſt; only the one doth it that his Children may have admiſſion into, the other that they may be continued in a Covenant-ſtate.

2. The other thing pleadable as a greater obligation upon and motive to Anti-Pædo-Baptiſts, to provoke and ingage them to a diligent uſe and performance of all duties in order to their Childrens Faith and Repentance, is their denyal of them to have as ſuch any Memberſhip in the Church, and any right to the bleſſings, priviledges, and benefits attending Memberſhip therein; and on the other hand affirming the neceſſity of Regeneration, Faith, and Repentance, in order to their admiſſion thereinto, and injoyment of thoſe benefits and bleſſings. Now it may be ſaid, ſure thoſe who are of this perſwaſion muſt needs be more ſtrongly obliged, and have more effectual motives to provoke them to endeavour the converſion of their Children, than thoſe that conceive their Children already members of the Church, and anſwerably are already intereſted in thoſe benefits and bleſſings. To this I ſhall only ſay as before, that the obligations upon, and motives to the one and the other to endeavour the converſion of their Children are one and the ſame, though the ends are different; for to wave that queſtion, whether Infants are admitted into the univerſal, or into a particular Church, this is certain, that the want of Faith and Repentance, when grown up to years of maturity, diſannuls all right, *Coram Deo*, to their Memberſhip in the Church, be it univerſal, or particular, and forfeits their

their right to all the bleſſings, benefits, and priviledges that as admitted thereunto they had a right to, and intereſt in. Now it is a right to, and injoyment of thoſe bleſſings and priviledges that is the obligation and motive to Parents to endeavour the converſion of their Children. Church-memberſhip abſolutely conſidered ſignifies nothing; 'tis intereſt in, and the injoyment of the aforeſaid benefits, bleſſings and priviledges that makes Church-memberſhip a good unto men, whether old or young. Now I ſay, Converſion, Faith and Repentance are as neceſſary to the continuing an intereſt in, and actually injoying them to thoſe who are already Members of the Church, as they are for their firſt admiſſion thereinto, and thereby coming to an intereſt in, and the injoyment of them, who afore were Aliens, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, from the Common-wealth of *Iſrael*, or wholly out of the Church. So that the obligations upon, and motives ingaging Parents to endeavour the converſion of their Children, or bring them to true Faith and Repentance, as they grow up to years of maturity, are the ſame to all men, whether of the one, or the other perſwaſion. But then,

2. The other conſideration I would offer is, That there are ſeveral obligations lying upon, and ſeveral motives improvable by Pædo-Baptiſts, beyond what thoſe of the contrary perſwaſion can apprehend themſelves under, or can be rationally improved by them, to provoke them diligenly to uſe all means, and vigorouſly perform all duties, they are in the Scriptures directed to in order to their Childrens converſion, Faith and Repentance.

1. Firſt, There is that ſpecial intereſt, and propriety that God hath in their Children, God lays claim

claim to a ſpecial propriety in the Seed of his People, they are his. Hence he aggravates the ſin of his ancient People, in offering up their children to Idols, by the conſideration of his own propriety in them, (*Ezek.* 16. 20, and 21.) *Moreover thou haſt taken thy ſons and thy daughters whom thou haſt born unto me, and theſe haſt thou ſacrificed unto them to be devoured,* (*viz.* to their Idols) *is this of thy whoredoms a ſmall matter, that thou haſt ſlain my children?* They were theirs by Generation, but his by Adoption. To offer any ſacrifice to Idols is exceeding bad, but to offer humane ſacrifices is worſe; but to offer their children that proceeded from their own bowels, is yet a higher aggravation of their ſin. There was not only cruelty, but ἀσοργία, and that even in the higheſt degree. And yet further, that which greatly aggravated their ſin was, that thoſe they ſacrificed were not in their own power, they were God's children that they ſacrificed, and anſwerably here was the higheſt injuſtice, I may call it Sacriledge, a robbing God to honour their Idols. But this we ſee, God claims a peculiar intereſt and propriety in the Seed of his People, and they are not only his, as all Creatures are, but they are his by ſpecial choice of them for his own uſe and ſervice; therefore Believers, including their Seed, are ſaid to be *a choſen generation* (1 Pet. 2. 9.) and according to a ſpecial relation they ſtand in towards him, they are called *his ſervants*, (Levit. 25. 41.) Now this intereſt and propriety that God hath in the Seed of his People is a ſtrong obligation upon them to bring them up for God, for his uſe and ſervice, that they may anſwer the relation wherein they ſtand towards him. God gives his People children, and intruſteth them with them, but it is to bring them up

for

for him. Hence to neglect the holy education of Children, is not only to transgress a command, but to be unfaithful in a truſt, which aggravates the ſin.

A truſt lays a peculiar obligation upon men to be faithful in it, *It is required in Stewards that a man be found faithful*, ſaith the Apoſtle (1 *Cor.* 4. 2.) when a man hath intruſted his child with another to be educated and inſtructed by him in any Art or Science, he expects faithfulneſs in him; and the very conſideration of the child's being intruſted with him for ſuch an end or purpoſe would ſtrongly oblige him thereunto. Thus the Seed of Believers are God's, he claims propriety in them, and intruſts them with Parents to be brought up for himſelf; and both Juſtice and Faithfulneſs requires that they do bring them up accordingly. The Apoſtle improves it as an argument to ingage Believers to glorifie God both with ſoul and body, becauſe both *are his*, (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.) Now as they are to glorify God both with ſoul and body; ſo they are to endeavour after ſuch a fitneſs and diſpoſition of both, that they may be more apt and meet to glorifie him with both: So their Children being the Lord's, they ought to endeavour after their fitneſs and meetneſs for his uſe and ſervice, and anſwerably to educate and bring them up: And the intereſt and propriety that God hath in them, with the conſideration of their being intruſted with them for him, is a ſtrong obligation upon them ſo to do: Sure it muſt be grievous to tender hearts to think that God's own ſervants ſhould prove enemies to him, eſpecially this being through any neglect on their part, that thoſe that God hath deſigned for himſelf, ſhould rebel againſt him through a fai-

lure

lure on their part in respect of their duty towards them. But

2. There is the Parents own act in dedicating theirs unto God, and ratifying and solemnizing that dedication of them by the Application of the Token of the Covenant. They are not only God's by vertue of his choice, but by vertue of their Parents resignation and dedication of them to him; which dedication they have made of them to God, they have also ratified and confirmed in an outward and solemn way, by applying the Token of the Covenant to them, and that must needs (supposing them to understand what they do) more strongly oblige, and more effectually move them to bring them up for God. They give them up to God to be his under their own hands and seals, as I may so speak. Now Parents thus dedicating and giving up their children to God, doth necessarily imply and include a purpose to bring them up for God, otherwise their giving them up to him would be mere hypocrisie and deceit. And therefore when *Elkanah* and *Hannah* had dedicated *Samuel* unto God, to serve him in the Tabernacle from his very Child-hood, they bring him up betimes to the Tabernacle, probably before he was capable of performing any service there: It was immediatly as he was weaned, therefore he is said to *be young*, (1 Sam. 1. 24.) *a child a child*, as the Hebrew * is, that is, a very young child; and the reason of their bringing him up so early, is conceived to be, that he might be instructed in the Law, and thereby fitted and prepared for future service; having given him up to God, they were careful to bring him up for God, to bring him up so, as he might

* *Hebræi, cum superlativis carent, pro iis geminatione utuntur.*

might be fitted for his ſervice. And this ſincerity and uprightneſs in the dedication that Parents make of their Children unto God doth indiſpenſibly require. *I know Abraham*, ſaith God, *that he will command his Children and his houſhold after him*, (Gen. 18. 19.) as if the Lord ſhould ſay, I know him to be a faithful and upright man; hence having given up his Children and Houſhold to me, he will uſe the means that they may ſerve me. So when *Jepthah* had vowed that whoſoever came firſt out of his door to meet him ſhould be the Lords, though it proved to be his daughter, and ſhe his only Child, yet he will give her up to God, according to the intendment of his vow (what that was I determine not) and he gives this reaſon, *I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back*, Judg. 11. 35. His own act in dedicating his daughter, though it was but an implicite dedication of her in particular, yet to him an indiſpenſible obligation to give her up to God. So Parents actual dedication of their Children unto God, eſpecially having ratified and ſolemnized that dedication by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them, adds greatly to the obligation that they are under to bring them up ſo, as that they may be the Lord's, may give up themſelves to ſerve and honour him when they grow up to a capacity ſo to do.

3. There are the great advantages that their Children are under, in order to the injoyment of all the grace, benefits, and bleſſings of the Covenant, as a further obligation upon, and motive to believing Parents, diligently to uſe the means, and perform their duty ſubſervient thereunto. What theſe advantages are, ſhall (if the Lord will) be ſhewed hereafter.

At

At preſent I ſay for Parents to ſee their Children under ſpecial advantages in order to their injoyment of the Grace, benefits, and bleſſings of the Covenant, muſt needs ſtrongly oblige, and powerfully move as well as incourage them to endeavour that they may come to the actual injoyment of them. When a man either ſeeth himſelf, or his Children, in a fair way, and under ſpecial advantages to injoy any good, he is thereby provokt to greater diligence in the uſe of means, that either himſelf, or his child may injoy that good. This was that which at leaſt in part quickned *Moſes* to ſo great importunity that he might go over *Jordan*, to ſee the good Land, *viz. Canaan*, becauſe God had begun to ſhew him his greatneſs, and his mighty hand, (*Deut.* 3. 24.) *Oh Lord*, ſaith he, *thou haſt begun to ſhew thy ſervant thy greatneſs, and thy mighty hand, I pray thee let me go over, and ſee the good land that is beyond* Jordan: as if he ſhould ſay, thou haſt brought me through all the difficulties and dangers of the Wilderneſs, thou haſt begun to make way to thy Peoples entrance into, and poſſeſſion of this good Land, and muſt I now, when ſo nigh unto it, and in ſuch a fair way with the reſt of thy people to come to the poſſeſſion and injoyment of it, yet be cut off, and never come to it? The loſs of falling ſhort of a mercy, when a man comes nigh to it, and is under peculiar advantages for the injoyment of it, troubles more than the non-injoyment of the ſame, or like Mercy, when a man is under no probability, or hath no peculiar advantages ever to injoy it. Hence to be nigh to, or under peculiar advantages for the injoyment of any mercy, quickens to diligence in the uſe of means, that we may not then fall ſhort of it, but may actually injoy it. And this

holds true whether the mercy respects a mans self, or his Children, or near Relations. Now I say the Children of Believers are near to, and under more peculiar advantages for the injoyment of the Grace, benefits and blessings of the Covenant, than the Seed of others are: Parents have (as I may so speak) some kind of hold of that grace, and those blessings and benefits for their Children; and Children have some hold for themselves: and when a man hath any hold of a good for himself or his, he is loth to let it go. Saith the Apostle to *Timothy*, and in him to all Christians, *Fight the good fight of Faith, lay hold on eternal life*, 1 Tim. 6. 12. The latter branch of this exhortation, *viz. To lay hold on eternal life*, may be taken as directive to Christians what to do more effectually to ingage and quicken themselves to a vigorous prosecution of their Spiritual Warfare, *they are to lay hold on eternal life*: ἐπιλαβοῦ τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς; saith the Apostle, which may be done by Christians while in this life. There are several wayes whereby Believers may lay hold on eternal life, while in the World, as by an applicatory Faith, whereby they apply and appropriate the promises of eternal life to themselves, as the *Psalmist*, *Psalm.* 16. so *Psalm.* 37. 24. So the Apostle, 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. So again eternal life is laid hold on by ardency of affection and desire, by possessing our selves of the first fruits of it, *&c.* Now to lay hold on eternal life these or the like ways puts life into Believers endeavours, so to fight this good fight of Faith, as thereby to come to the full injoyment of that life in Heaven. When a man hath got any hold of any good for himself or his, he will strive and tug hard rather than part with it. Now I say Believers have some hold of the Grace and blessings

sings of the Covenant for their Children, they see their Children have some hold through the extent of the Covenant to them, hence they must needs be more effectually ingaged and provoked to greater diligence in the use of means, that their Children may come to the actual injoyment of that Grace, those blessings and priviledges, than they would be, had not either themselves or Children any such hold of that Grace, and those blessings and benefits.

4. There is the goodness love and kindness of God in extending his Covenant to their Seed, and vouchsafing the ratification and confirmation of it, by the Application of the Token thereof unto them, as a strong obligation upon, and motive to Parents to use their utmost diligence in order to their Childrens imbracement of the Covenant, and giving up themselves to God as his People, as thereby the Kingdom of Christ may be inlarged and his Interest promoted in the World. The love and kindness of God, how or which way soever expresst, either towards themselves or theirs, is greatly obliging to sincere Believers, to endeavour to their utmost power the promotion of the Interest, and inlargement of the Kingdom of Christ in the World. Love is of a constraining nature, it hath a compulsive force and power in it, *We love him, because he loved us first*, saith *John*. Love begets and excites love, and love is industrious and laborious; hence we read of *the labour of love*, (1 Thess. 1. 3.) The Apostle gives it as the great reason of their so zealous preaching the Gospel, that to some they seemed *to be beside themselves*, viz. because *the love of Christ did constrain them*, 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. It is true, the love that God hath expresst towards a Believer, in the things he hath done for, and the good he hath vouch-

ſafed to himſelf as perſonally conſidered in and by Chriſt, may and ought to have a conſtraining force upon him to live to him, and anſwerably to endeavour to his utmoſt power according to the capacity wherein he ſtands to promote the Intereſt and Kingdom of Chriſt in the World. But yet God's extending his Covenant to their Seed, and confirming it by the Application of the Token thereof unto them, muſt rationally greatly add to the compulſive force and efficacy that his love hath upon them, and that for a twofold reaſon.

1. Becauſe his love to themſelves is greatly heightned thereby. To all he hath done for, and vouchſafed to themſelves, there is the addition of that Grace vouchſafed unto theirs: and the greater the love of God is, and appears to be to a Believer, the greater efficacy and power it hath to excite his love unto God, and conſtrain him to lay out himſelf for the advantage of the Intereſt and Kingdom of Chriſt in the World.

2. Becauſe God's making the Seed of Believers partakers of the ſame Grace and Goodneſs vouchſafed to them, makes it alike reaſonable that they, as they grow up to years of maturity, ſhould live to him, as they themſelves deſire to do.

There is a meetneſs and fitneſs that thoſe that partake of the Grace and Goodneſs of God ſhould live to him. And Parents ſeeing their Children made partakers of the ſame Grace and Goodneſs of God that themſelves do partake of, have the ſame Covenant extended to them, that is entred with themſelves, and that ratified and confirmed to them the ſame way, as it is ratified and confirmed to themſelves, they muſt needs judge it alike reaſonable, and meet that theirs

ſhould

ſhould live unto God, as well as themſelves. Hence they muſt needs be more effectually ſtirred up, and provokt to uſe their utmoſt endeavours that they may ſo do. So that I ſay the Love, Grace and Goodneſs of God in extending his Covenant to the Seed of his People, and ratifying and confirming it by the Application of the Token thereof to them, is a very great obligation upon, and may and ought to be improved as a powerful motive by them, to provoke and ingage themſelves to the utmoſt diligence, in uſing all means that their Children may perſonally imbrace the Covenant, and give up themſelves to God as his People, as they grow up to years of maturity, as thereby the Intereſt of Chriſt is promoted, and his Kingdom inlarged. And yet further there are three things, the conſideration of which may and will ſtill heighten and increaſe the conſtraining efficacy and force, that the Love, Grace, and Goodneſs of God hath upon the hearts of believing Parents to move and provoke them to the afore-mentioned diligence.

1. That it is the Intereſt of their Redeemer that is promoted, and his Kingdom that is inlarged thereby.

2. That God hath extended his Covenant and appointed the Application of the Token thereof to the Seed of Believers, with reference to this very end, *viz.* the increaſe and inlargement of the Kingdom of Chriſt in the World, and that in purſuance of that promiſe made to him, that he ſhould *have the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the utmoſt ends of the earth for his Poſſeſſion.*

3. That they are their own Children, thoſe that came out of their own bowels, towards whom they are to uſe the means, in order to the ends mentioned. The Love and Goodneſs of God hath a conſtraining

power upon the hearts of Believers, to do his will however revealed, or whatever reference their doing of it hath. But when the things, whereabout his will is revealed, relate to the promotion of the Intereſt and inlargement of the Kingdom of their Lord and Redeemer Jeſus Chriſt, and the increaſe and inlargement of his Kingdom was deſigned by his expreſſing his love and goodneſs to them in the ways he hath done; and they are their Children the fruit of their own bodies, that are the objects of their duty, which in obedience to the will of God they are to perform; ſurely now the Love, Grace, and Goodneſs of God muſt needs have the greateſt efficacy and power in it, to engage, yea conſtrain them to a vigorous and diligent performance of that their duty.

5. There is the aggravation that the ſin of the Seed of Believers in not accepting of the Covenant, and performing the conditions of it, receives from their precedent Covenant-ſtate, further to oblige and provoke Parents, who own that their Covenant-ſtate, and have applyed the Token of the Covenant on the account thereof, to endeavour to the utmoſt of their power, that they may accept of and perform the conditions of it. Not to accept of the Covenant, but on the other hand to reject it, is a greater ſin in thoſe, that have a precedent intereſt in it, than in thoſe that have no ſuch intereſt. It was a greater ſin in *Eſau* to deſpiſe his Birth-right and Bleſſing, then the bare not taking hold of the Covenant was to thoſe that had no ſuch birth-priviledg. To deſpiſe or reject a good granted, is more than the bare not receiving any good offered. Now Parents conſidering how greatly the ſin of their Children will be aggravated, in caſe they perform not the conditions of, but on the other hand

reject

reject the Covenant, and conſequently that their condemnation will be greater than the condemnation of others, muſt needs ſtrongly oblige, and more effectually provoke them to greater diligence in the diſcharge of their duty towards them, in order to the preventing their rejection; and on the other hand in order to their accepting and performing the conditions of the Covenant.

6. There is the reference that Parents faithful diſcharge of their duty towards their Children hath to their Childrens preſervation in their Covenant-ſtate, and conſequently injoying the full good and benefit thereof, as they grow up to years of maturity, as a farther obligation upon, and motive to provoke them thereunto. God hath taken the Seed of Believers into Covenant with himſelf, as they are their Seed, and continues their Covenant-ſtate during their Infancy, on the account of their Parents Faith. But when they grow up to years of maturity, the condition of their continuance in that Covenant-ſtate, and conſequently injoying the bleſſings of the Covenant, is devolved upon themſelves; they muſt in their own perſons imbrace and take hold of the Covenant, and perform the conditions of it, which that they may do, God requires their Parents to teach them his way, and command them to walk in it; which duty of Parents in teaching and commanding their Children is the firſt and moſt proper means appointed of God in order to their perſonal imbracement, and taking hold of his Covenant; and hence in caſe Parents fail in the diſcharge of their duty, their Children are deprived of the firſt and moſt proper means ſubſervient to their preſervation in their Covenant-ſtate. And though it may ſeem hard to ſay, that God

will not vouchſafe other means, and bleſs them to the attaining of that end; yet this I muſt ſay, there is more depending upon Parents diſcharge of their duty, than moſt are aware of; and that God will vouchſafe other means and bleſs them to ſupply the defect of Parents duty, is (as I judge) more than they have warrant to expect. However the depriving them of the firſt and moſt proper means muſt needs be extremely hazardous, and is uſually given as a main reaſon of ſo many of the Seed of the Righteous proving wicked. And did Parents but underſtand, and ſeriouſly conſider this, how great an obligation muſt it needs be to them faithfully to diſcharge their duty towards their Children?

7. And laſtly, There is the diſhonour redounding unto God, by Childrens rejecting the Covenant, and falling off to ways of ſin and profaneneſs, yet farther to oblige Parents to a faithful diſcharge of their duty towards them. When men hear the Covenant-intereſt of the Seed of Believers aſſerted, and ſee the Token thereof applyed to them, and yet after ſee them to run into the ſame wayes of ſin and ungodlineſs with the Children of others, they are apt to reflect upon God, and to charge him with unfaithfulneſs in his promiſes, or deluding the World with a ſhew of extending more Grace to Believers than indeed he doth. And this very thing, *viz.* the frequent apoſtacies of the Seed of Believers, and their walking in the ſame ways of impiety with the Children of others, though wholly groundleſsly, yet I conceive is no little ſtumbling-block in the way of thoſe whoſe judgment and practice lyes oppoſite to what hath been pleaded for. Now the preventing this diſhonour redounding unto God, and removing

this

this ſtumbling-block out of the way of the weak, is a ſtrong obligation upon Parents to a faithful performance of their duty towards their Children. And the laying theſe and the like obligations upon Parents to a diligent performance of that their duty towards their Children, may be one ſpecial reaſon of God's appointing the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them. And by what hath been ſaid we may ſee how much greater obligations are upon Believers, who own their Childrens intereſt in the Covenant, and have the Token thereof applyed to them upon that account, and how many motives are improveable by them to provoke and ſtir up themſelves to a faithful diſcharge of their duty towards them; than what are upon, or improveable by the contrary minded, according to their reſpective judgments and practices.

2. The other enquiry is, whether Pædo-Baptiſts, or Anti-Pædo-Baptiſts, according to what they reſpectively hold with reference to their Children, have greater and ſurer ground to hope, and expect that the means uſed, or duties performed by them, ſhall be effectual and ſucceſsful; or whether the means uſed, and duties performed by the one, or the other, be more likely to prove effectual and ſucceſsful for the accompliſhing the ends aimed at?

Anſw. Now for this that the advantages ly on the ſide of the Pædo-Baptiſts will be undeniably evident by a double conſideration, which I ſhall but as it were mention, becauſe they muſt both be more fully inſiſted upon in a more proper place.

1. Conſider that Pædo-Baptiſts, according to what they hold with reference to their Children, have vaſtly more means to uſe in order to their converſion and imbracement

imbracement of the Covenant, and giving themſelves up to God according to the tenour of it, then Anti-Pædo-Baptiſts have; they have many more motives, arguments, and incouragements to propoſe, apply to, and preſs upon their Children, than the contrary-minded have. And where the means are greater and more effectual in themſelves, their efficacy and ſucceſs may, according to the ordinary way of God's working upon men, be expected to be anſwerable.

2. They have many promiſes both made to themſelves with reference to their Children and houſholds, and to their Children, as under the Covenant, and of the viſible Church and Kingdom of Chriſt, beyond what the contrary-minded can according to their judgments and principles apply to themſelves or theirs: which promiſes, though they ſhould not infallibly ſecure Grace to all the Seed of Believers, how careful ſoever they may be in the uſe of means, and how faithful ſoever in the diſcharge of their duty towards them, yet they are vaſtly greater ground to hope for ſucceſs, than there would be, ſuppoſing no ſuch promiſes were made either to Parents or Children. But theſe things ſhall (if the Lord will) be more cleared up hereafter. Now then let all men judge how unrighteous and unreaſonable that charge laid upon Pædo-Baptiſm is, *viz.* that it lays a foundation to Ignorance and Profaneneſs; and how much more juſtly that charge may be laid upon the contrary judgment and practice. We ſee Pædo-Baptiſts are under vaſtly greater obligations to a diligent uſe of means, and performance of duty in order to the converſion of their Children, and their perſonal imbracement of the Covenant, than the contrary-minded can according to their judgment look upon themſelves as under,

under, and have vaſtly more ground to expect that their uſe of means, and performance of duty ſhall be ſucceſsful, than they have. But let that ſuffice for the reaſons of Gods appointing the Application of the Token of the Covenant to the Infant-ſeed of his People, as they reſpect the Parents, to whoſe Seed that Application is to be made.

3. The reaſons reſpecting the Children themſelves, to whom the Token of the Covenant is to be applyed; and thus the great reaſon is their good, benefit, and advantage. But that brings me to the ſecond grand enquiry. From what hath been ſaid, we may evidently ſee, that the rationality of this Inſtitution is not only ſecured to us by the infinit wiſdom of God inſtituting, but ſufficient reaſon for it lyes obvious to all ſerious conſiderate minds.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The second Question proposed. A brief Introduction to the Answer of it. The first benefit that the Seed of Believers receive by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them declared, viz. *They have thereby a solemn admission into, and Membership in the visible Church, Kingdom, or Family of Christ. An Objection answered. The good redounding to them by that their admission and Membership shewed in two Instances.* 1. *They are comprehended in, and have an equal benefit with the rest of the Members of the Church, by all these prayers put up for the Church in general.* 2. *They are under that special providential care that Christ exerciseth over his Church.* 3. *Questions relating thereunto resolved.*

Quest. 2. WHat are the Benefits, and advantages arising to the Infant-seed of Believers, from the Application of the Tokens of the Covenant to them, or what good do they receive thereby?

Answ. That all Ordinances of Divine Original, are a signification and signal expression of the good will of God unto men; and consequently aim at, and tend

tend to the good and benefit of thoſe that are the due and proper ſubjects of them, hath been intimated already, and may be alike infallibly concluded from the goodneſs, as their rationality from the wiſdom of the Inſtitutor. As for that ſpecial Ordinance under our preſent conſideration, the Apoſtles anſwer to much the ſame queſtion, put with reſpect to Circumciſion, is applicable to, and may be given, as a more general ſolution of the queſtion now put, reſpective to both Circumciſion and Baptiſm, as applyed to Infants: the advantage they have thereby *is much, and that every way.* What that good and advantage is, and wherein it doth conſiſt is now to be inquired into: and in general, or as to the ſum and ſubſtance of it, it's threefold.

1. Firſt, They thereby are ſolemnly admitted into, and incorporated in the viſible Church, Kingdom, or Family of Chriſt, and thereupon become, to uſe the Apoſtles phraſe, *Fellow-citizens of the Saints, and of the Houſhold of God.* That Baptiſm now is as Circumciſion of old was, a ſolemn right for the initiation, and admiſſion of all thoſe that are rightful Subjects of it, into the viſible Church, or body of Chriſt, is agreed on on all hands; which that the Infants we now ſpeak of are, hath been already proved, and is now taken for granted, which being granted, that they have this good and benefit by it will receive a ready acknowledgment from all, and indeed that to have a Memberſhip in the Church, or to be *Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Houſhold of God,* is a good, or advantage unto men, cannot be rationally queſtioned by any, though wherein the good and advantage of it in the caſe of Infants does conſiſt, is not obvious unto all. And therefore muſt now be

more

more throughly ſearched into, and declared. But before I proceed to that, one objection muſt be removed out of our way, which ſeems in the judgment of ſome, ſtrongly to oppoſe Infants injoyment of that priviledge, and conſequently their right to that Ordinance, appointed for the ſolemn admiſſion of men into it: And it is this.

Object. It may be ſaid, that it may ſeem that Infants as ſuch cannot rightfully be admitted into, or incorporated in the viſible Church or body of Chriſt, or be of his Houſhold, and Family as viſible, and that for this reaſon: Becauſe memberſhip in the viſible Church, Body or Kingdom of Chriſt does preſuppoſe memberſhip in his inviſible Body, ſeeing to be a member of his viſible Body, is nothing elſe but viſibly to appear to be a real member of his inviſible Body: that diſtinction of viſible and inviſible not being *diſtinctio rei, ſed tantum nominis*, only a diſtinction of one and the ſame Church, *à duplici modo unionis & communionis cum Chriſto capite* (ſtill) *interno & externo*; ſo that the Church by theſe terms of viſible, and inviſible, is only diſtinguiſhed of, in regard of a certain adjunct, *viz.* The manner or kind of union and communion that the ſeveral members it is conſtituted of, have with Chriſt the head, *viz.* internal, and real, or only external, or appearing: Hence all that are, or ought to be received as members of the viſible Church, they are and ought to be ſuch, as viſibly appear to have real internal Union and Communion with Chriſt. Now it will be ſaid, that Infants as ſuch ſeem incapable of any ſuch Union, and Communion with him; or ſuppoſe them ſimply, or abſolutly capable; yet whether any actually have, eſpecially which of them in particular have ſuch a Union,

and

and Communion with Chriſt, is wholly unknown to us, and then how can they be ſaid viſibly to appear members of the inviſible Body of Chriſt? which they muſt do in caſe they have a right to memberſhip in his viſible Body.

Anſw. In anſwer to this Objection I would ſay theſe three or four things.

1. Firſt, That the difficulty of reſolving ſome doubts, that may ariſe with reference to perſons right to, or injoyment of Goſpel-priviledges, ought not to be pleaded for the overthrowing, or diſanulling their right to them, when God hath evidently declared them in his Word, to have ſuch a right to, or to have had, by his own approbation the actual poſſeſſion and injoyment of them: God may have plainly revealed their right, and yet more darkly revealed many things relating to that their right. Inſtances would not be wanting, would I inſiſt upon them, of Goſpel-priviledges, that the Scriptures evidently declare perſons ſo and ſo qualified to have a real right to, and to have the actual poſſeſſion and injoyment of, and yet doubts of no eaſie reſolution may be raiſed with reference to their right to them, and the way and manner of their coming to the poſſeſſion of them.

2. But ſecondly, And rather that the caſe of Infants of Believers now, is no otherwiſe concerned in this Objection, than the caſe of the Infant-ſeed of the Church and people of God under the firſt Teſtament were, and it may be pleaded with equal ſtrength againſt their having been Members of the viſible Church, or Body of Chriſt then, as againſt the right of Infant-ſeed of Believers to memberſhip in the viſible Church, or body of Chriſt now; the Church then

then constituted, and made up of the natural posterity of *Abraham*, with the addition of some few Proselites from among the Gentiles, was the visible Body of Christ then, as well as the Church made up of Jews and Gentiles under the new Testament is. This I have so fully evidenced elsewhere, that nothing more need be added here, and indeed the Apostle in *Eph.* 3. 6. is so plain and expres, that the Gentiles, as converted to the Faith, *are of the same body with the Jews* under the first Testament; that to deny them to have been the body of Christ, is to deny the Church now to be so; and that the Apostle speaks there of the visible body of Christ, is undenyable, in that what he speaks of the Gentiles more generally, he applyes to that Church of the *Ephesians* in particular, *Chap.* 2. 19. Each individual member of which Church that they did belong to the invisible Body of Christ he would not affirm, but plainly intimates his suspition of the contrary, *Acts* 20. *ult.* Yet he speaks indefinitly, or universally of this Church as injoying this priviledg, to be of the same body, *viz.* of Christ, that the Jews afore were of: an undoubted evidence that he speaks of the body of Christ as visible: so that the Jews, or the Jewish Church under the first Testament, was the visible body of Christ; for the Gentiles as converted to the Faith, and gathered into particular Churches, are of the same body. Now it is past all rational contradiction, that the Infant-seed both of Jews, and proselited Gentiles were Members of the same body with their Parents: hence let it be resolved how far, or in what sense membership in the visible Body of Christ, and Union, and Communion with him as the Head was necessary, or presupposed to their membership in his visible Body, the

same,

ſame, and no other is neceſſary, and muſt be preſuppoſed to Infants memberſhip in the viſible Body of Chriſt ſtill: the ſame anſwer then that will ſatisfie this Objection, as they were concerned in it, will alike ſatisfy it, as the Infant-ſeed of Believers now are concerned in it, in as much as they are equally and alike concerned in it.

3. Thirdly and laſtly, I anſwer, that it may be granted, yea, I conceive, it muſt be affirmed; that the Infant-ſeed of Believers, and that univerſally, have by vertue of the Covenant entred with them, a real and proper Union with Chriſt, and anſwerably may be looked upon, and reputed in ſome ſenſe, as Members of his inviſible body, and on that ground are to be admitted into his viſible Body, Church or Kingdom; only here, that all miſtakes may be obviated, we muſt diſtinguiſh of Union with Chriſt, it is either Political, or Phyſical: * By that Union I call Political, I intend that Union, which conſiſts in thoſe mutual Relations, wherein Chriſt and his Church ſtand related each to other, as King and Subjects, Maſter and Servants, Shepherd and Sheep: the *ratio fundendi*, or *fundamentum proximum* of this Union, is the mutual conſent of Chriſt, and thoſe that are thus united to him, either in their own perſons, as in the caſe of the adult, or on their behalf, by thoſe *cujus juris ſunt*, as in the caſe of Infants, to accept and take each other in theſe reſpective Relations; and this is that Union properly conſtituted by the Covenant.

It a Chriſto Eccleſia unita eſt, ut in eâ unione extet exemplum utriuſq; unionis, ſcilicet Polit cæ & Phyſicæ. Vide Camer. *de* Eccleſiæ. *p.* 225.

By that Union I call Phyſical, I intend a higher kind of Union, *viz. cujus vinculum eſt Spiritus ſanctus*,

Elus, that which is made by the indwelling of the ſame Spirit that was firſt poured out upon Chriſt in the ſoul; which is proper to thoſe that are truly regenerated; in regard of which, they are compared to *branches*, and Chriſt to a *Vine*, and Chriſt and they are ſaid to be *one ſpirit*, 1 Cor. 6. 17. or one ſpiritual body: and though it is true, that in reſpect of the adult, thoſe that have a Political Union with Chriſt, are ſuppoſed alſo to have a Phyſical Union; yet it is not neceſſary that all that have the former ſhould have the latter: Jeſus Chriſt may take men into what degree or kind of Union with himſelf he ſees meet. Now when I ſay the Infant-ſeed of Believers have a real Union with Chriſt, I mean it only of a Political, which we may call a mere relative Union; he is their King, they are his Subjects; he their Maſter, they his Servants; he their Shepherd, they his Sheep: and this Union they have with Chriſt is the proper ground of their admiſſion into the Church viſible, or into the Kingdom, Family, Houſhold, or, as I may ſo ſpeak, Sheepfold of Chriſt; and that the Infant-ſeed of Believers, and that univerſally, have ſuch a Union with Chriſt, may be evidenced by a twofold argument.

1. Firſt all thoſe, by whom, or on whoſe behalf the conditions of the Covenant are really and truly performed, have a real and true Union with Chriſt; but though not by (for that's not required of them) yet on the behalf of the Infant-ſeed of Believers, and that univerſally, the conditions of the Covenant are really and truly performed. Therefore, *&c.*

Both Propoſitions carry their own evidence with ſo much clearneſs, that as I cannot at preſent apprehend what can be replyed to; ſo I conceive the adding

ding of any thing for the proof of either would be superfluous; surely the conditions of the Covenant between Christ, and God in him, and the Seed of Believers, being performed, though not by them, yet on their behalf, which is all one as though by them there must needs immediatly result such a Union with Christ. Take it in all instances of this kind of Union, and the mutual acceptation and performance of the Covenant, or contracts by which that Union is constituted, and the Union it self, necessarily results and flows therefrom.

Now that the conditions of the Covenant are really and truly performed on the behalf of the Seed of Believers, needs no other proof, than that they are Believers, whose Seed we now speak of; it is the Faith and Repentance of Parents, that are the conditions of the Seed's acceptation into Covenant.

2. The same Union, that the Covenant constitutes between Christ and some, it constitutes between him and all, with whom it is equally, and alike established; but the Covenant constitutes a true and real Union between Christ and some, *viz.* adult Believers, therefore it constitutes the same Union between Christ and others, *viz.* their Infant-seed, it being equally and alike established with them, as it is with Believers themselves. This argument carries its evidence with the same clearness as the former. For though it is true, the conditions of the Covenant, as established with adult Believers, differ from the conditions of it, as established with Infants; yet that hinders not, but that the Union constituted between Christ and them, is one and the same with that constituted between him and adult Believers. In as much as the Covenant accepts of the Parents Faith,

as the condition of the Child's admiſſion thereinto, as w ll as the Faith of grown Perſons for their own admiſſion thereinto; now it is the Covenant as abſolutely conſidered, and not as requiring ſuch and ſuch conditions, that conſtitutes this kind of Union between Chriſt and men, be they adult or Infants; neither can that higher kind of Union, (*viz.* Phyſical,) that Believers have with Chriſt, be pleaded as a prejudice to Infants injoyment of this lower kind of Union with him, ſeing neither the antecedent operations, or conſequent indwelling of the Spirit in the ſoul, whereby that higher kind of Union is effected, are any otherwiſe neceſſary to this lower kind of Union, which I call Political or merely relative, than the performance of the conditions of the Covenant by the adult, and the Promiſes of the Covenant appertaining to them having perſonally performed them, make ſo to be, when the conditions of the Covenant may be truly and really performed without ſuch operations of the Spirit, as in the caſe of Infants they may, and there is no promiſe of the indwelling preſence of the Spirit, as is alſo their caſe; there a political Union may be really conſtituted, and yet no higher Union granted: ſo that Infants have a real Political Union with Chriſt is evident, and indeed to grant them an intereſt in the Covenant, and yet deny them ſuch a Union, would be abſolutely contradictory. What Objections carry any appearance of oppoſition againſt what hath been now granted, yea aſſerted, ſhall be conſidered hereafter.

This I ſay at preſent, that the Infant-ſeed of Believers may be granted, yea muſt be affirmed to have a true and real Political, or relative Union with Chriſt the Head of the Church, which as it gives them a right

to

to membership, ſo is a ſufficient warrant for their admiſſion into the actual poſſeſſion of that their right in the Church, Kingdom, or Family of Chriſt as viſible here upon earth: neither are we concerned, as I conceive, to inquire, or determine how far, or in what ſenſe they may be ſaid by vertue of this Union, to be Members of the Church, or Body of Chriſt as inviſible, ſeing our judgment and practice relating unto them have divine revelation for their ground and rule. This objection being removed out of our way, I ſhall now proceed to inquire, what good, benefit, or advantage the Infant-ſeed of Believers have by their membership in the viſible Church, Body, or Kingdom of Chriſt; and it may be reduced to theſe three heads.

1. Firſt, which I ſhall but touch upon, they, as Members of the viſible Church, are comprehended in, and have the benefit of thoſe prayers, that are continually made for the whole *Iſrael* of God, or the Church of God in general, as it is the duty of Believers in their more general Aſſemblies, ſo of each particular Believer, to make known their requeſts unto God for themſelves, or on his own behalf, *by prayer, ſupplication with thanksgiving*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Phil.* 4. So to pray for *Jeruſalem*, or the Church of God in general, *pray for the peace of* Jeruſalem, in *Pſal.* 122.6. By *Jeruſalem* we are to underſtand the Church of God in general, and as this is the duty of Believers, ſo that love both to Chriſt the head, and to the whole Body, of which each in particular is a Member, that is the inſeparable effect of regeneration, obliges and conſtrains them to the performance of it, hence it is but ſeldom but ſincere Saints, eſpecially in their more ſolemn addreſſes unto God, do leave ſome petitions for the Church in general, ſee it

in the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 51. 18. So in the Apoſtle, *Gal.* 1. 16. Though the one was only making application to God for relief in a particular caſe, the other leaving his valedictory benediction with thoſe he had written to; yet *Zion*, or the *Iſrael* of God, ſhall not be forgotten by the one or the other. Hence there is, as I may ſo ſpeak, a ſtock of Prayers, (not treaſury of Merits) continually treaſuring up for the Church of God, in which the Infant-ſeed of Believers have their intereſt and ſhare, and this is no ſmall benefit to have ſo many thouſands, whom the Lord hath appointed as his remembrancers, daily putting him in mind of his Covenant and Promiſes, as made with and to his Church, whereof they are Members, as well as of the Covenant and Promiſes made with, and to them in ſpecial, as the Seed of ſuch Parents: and this, if duly conſidered, might yield great comfort to believing Parents, that theirs, as well as themſelves, are dayly preſented before the Throne of Grace by ſo many, who are under the promiſe of having the ear of God open to them.

2. And rather being Members of the viſible Church, Kingdom or Family of our Lord Chriſt, they have a joynt intereſt with all other members in that ſpecial providential care, that he exerciſes over his own houſe. That the work of providence is put into the hand of Chriſt by the Father, is evident; as from variety of oher Scriptures, ſo in ſpecial from that, *John* 5. 22. where Chriſt himſelf tells us, *that the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son*; yet not ſo, as to ceaſe to work himſelf, for the Father works in and by the Son: but that the work of Providence is put into the hand of the Son,

is evident; and this work of Providence, or providential care of Chriſt is twofold.

1. Firſt more general, and ſo it extends to the utmoſt bounds and limits of the creation of God; no creature that received its being from God, but it is under providence, as adminiſtred by Chriſt, as all things are made by him, ſo by him do all things conſiſt.

2. Secondly more ſpecial, and thus the Church is the proper object of the ſpecial providential care of Chriſt; therefore he is ſaid by way of Emphaſis to be *the keeper of Iſrael*, Pſal. 121. 4. *He that keepeth Iſrael* (or as the words may be read, he that is *keeping Iſrael*) *neither ſlumbreth nor ſleepeth*: as we have here the ſpecial object of divine Providence, (*viz.*) *Iſrael*, that is the Church, ſo the exactneſs and ſpeciality of that providential care exerciſed towards, or over that object intimated, partly in the word *keepeth*, or *keeping*, that is carefully, and diligently keeping, * more fully declared in the following words, *neither ſlumbreth nor ſleepeth*: a man though he fall not aſleep, yet, if he ſlumber, is greatly indiſpoſed to diſcharge any work he is ingaged in: a ſhepherd though he be not faſt aſleep, as we ſay, yet, if in a ſlumber, his ſheep are expoſed to danger: but to ſhew the exactneſs of that providential care that our Lord Chriſt exerciſeth over his Church, it is here ſaid of him, *nec dormit, nec dormitat, he neither ſleeps, nor ſlumbers*; And hence again the Lord promiſeth *to keep* his Church, ſpeaking of it under the notion of a Vineyard, *night and day*, Iſa. 27. 3. as his eye is alwayes open, he is alwayes awake, not in the leaſt ſlumbring; ſo his eye is alwayes upon his-

* *Curam ſolicitudinem, & diligentiam connotat.*

Church, *he keeps it night and day*; now night and day divide time: from all which we may ſee, that the Church is the ſpecial object of the providential care of Chriſt, the Church is his ſpecial charge, ſo his care is anſwerable towards, or over it, he exerciſes a moſt exact providential care towards or over his own Family. And here we may further obſerve, that as the work of Providence is put into the hand of Chriſt; ſo he imploys the Angels as his Miniſters in the adminiſtration thereof, *he maketh his Angels ſpirits, and his Miniſters a flame of fire*, Heb. 1.7. according to their eſſences and natures, ſo he employs them as his Servants and Miniſters, in managing the work of Providence put into his hands; hence as the Church is the object of his ſpecial providential care, ſo the Angels perform their Miniſtery with a ſpecial reſpect to, and for the good and benefit of it; hence ſaid to be *ſent forth to miniſter for them, who ſhall be heirs of Salvation*, Heb. 1. 14. though they ſerve Chriſt in the whole work of Providence, yet they have their ſervice, and Miniſtry eſpecially aſſigned them, with reſpect to the good and benefit of the Church, and the particular members thereof, as thoſe that are to be heirs of Salvation; now the Infant-ſeed of Believers being rightful members of the viſible Church, or body of Chriſt, have the wings of his ſpecial providence ſtretched over them, and have a joynt intereſt in this ſervice, and Miniſtry of Angels with the adult members; yea at leaſt, as ſome, if not moſt of our beſt Expoſitors underſtand that paſſage of our Lord Chriſt in *Mat.* 18. 10. Infants have a more ſpecial intereſt in their Miniſtry, their ſtates incapacifying them to take any care of themſelves are more eſpecially committed to the charge of Angels; *Take heed* ſayes our Lord Chriſt, *that ye de-*

ſpiſe

ſpiſe not one of theſe little ones: for I ſay unto you, that in Heaven their Angels do alwayes behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven: by theſe little ones, are underſtood little Children, if not alone intended, yet as included and comprehended, they have their Angels, that in Heaven behold the face of God in Heaven, that is, ſtand alwayes ready to recieve commands from God, for their guidance in their ſervice and miniſtration unto theſe little ones, to whoſe care and charge they are committed, *Videre faciem Patris*, id eſt, *aſtare Deo tanquam Regi obſervantes ejus nutum, ut capeſſant ipſius mandata de ipſis emittendis ad cuſtodiam puerorum*, ſaith *Piſcator*:

* But whether we are to underſtand our Lord Chriſt as ſpeaking of little ones in a literal and proper ſenſe or no; yet that his providential care exerciſed towards, or over his Church or Family, does extend to them in common with the reſt of the members thereof, is ſufficiently evident from the univerſality of that phraſe, *he keepeth Iſrael*; none that appertain to his *Iſrael* are from under his care, or excluded from the ſervice or miniſtration of the Angels, and ſurely this is no little benefit, that the Seed of Believers have by their memberſhip in the viſible Church, they are under that ſpecial providential care he exerciſes over his own houſe: but for the further clearing up of this, the reſolution of two or three queſtions may be neceſſary.

* *Vide* Bulling. *in loco*, Junius his *Irenicum Meditatio* in Pſ. 121. 2. Gerhard *de Baptiſmo*, Mr. Perkins, Doct. Prideux in their Sermons upon this place, *&c.*

Firſt, Whether this Providential care of Chriſt over his Church be extended equally and alike to all that are viſible members of it, or whether he hath not

a peculiar reſpect to election, and a real work of Grace upon the heart, and conſequently, ſeing we deny Infants, as ſuch, to have a real work of Grace upon their hearts, and affirm that there is an election of Grace among them, unto which ſome do, others do not appertain, whether this providential care of Chriſt be not appropriated only to the Elect among them?

Anſw. In the reſolution of this queſtion ſeveral things might be conſidered, which yet I ſhal wave, and ſhall only obſerve, that the Angels, whom our Lord Chriſt imploys as his Servants and Miniſters in the work of Providence, do act in their miniſtration, either according to a more general commiſſion and charge they have received, or elſe according to particular commands relating to the good and benefit of each particular perſon, *hic & nunc*; and that Angels do act according to a more general commiſſion, as well as according to particular commands they receive from Chriſt, for the good and benefit of his Church, is not only conſonant to reaſon, but may be evidenced from Scripture: and hence our Divines diſtinguiſh of their Miniſtry; * it is either, ſay they, ordinary or extraordinary; their ordinary Miniſtry is, that they perform by vertue, and in purſuance of their more general commiſſion; their extraordinary Miniſtry is that they perform in obedience to, and in purſuance of particular commands and directions they recieve from Chriſt, whether relating to the Church in general, or any part of it in this or that nation, or any particular member.

* *Miniſterium Angelorum eſt duplex, ordinarium, & extraordinarium*, Junii Eccleſ. *cap.* 4. *pag.* 1548.

Now ſuppoſe we grant, that Angels have many particular commands relating to the good of the Elect, beyond

beyond what they have relating to the good of the Non-elect, yet, ſo far as they perform their Miniſtry according to their more general commiſſion, they have an equal reſpect to all, without conſideration had to election, or non-election, which are ſecrets to them as well as to us; yea it may be further obſerved, that our Lord Chriſt himſelf, in the exerciſe of this his providential care over his Church, hath a greater reſpect to the Non-elect Infant members, (I may add to the Non-elect adult, ſuppoſing their ways and actions do not openly proclaim the Hypocriſie of their hearts) than he hath to thoſe that are wholly Aliens (whether Infants, or adult) to the Common-wealth of *Iſrael*, and anſwerably does give many particular directions to his Angels relating to their good, beyond what he gives relating to the good of thoſe that are, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, without: the truth of what is now affirmed is eſtabliſhed upon a twofold ground.

1. Firſt the ordinary way of Chriſt's dealing with men, eſpecially in his outward diſpenſations towards them; he deals with them according to what they are, or appear to be, not according to what he foreſees they will be, or will do; hence ſayes the Lord by the Prophet *Azariah*, to *Aſa*, *Judah* and *Benjamin*, *the Lord is with you, while you be with him*, 2 Chron. 15. 2. Though there might be, as doubtleſs there were, many whoſe hearts were not ſound nor upright with God, yet this promiſe is made to them in general, that while they ſhould keep with God in the obſervation of his commands, he would be with them.

2. Secondly, The other ground, upon which what hath been affirmed is eſtabliſhed, is the indefinitneſs of the Apoſtle's expreſſion, *Heb.* 1. 14. Where ſpeak-

ſpeaking of the Angels, *are they not*, ſaith he, *miniſtring ſpirits, ſent forth for the good of them that ſhall be heirs of Salvation*? The Angels miniſter unto men, as conſidered and eyed under that notion, *viz.* as heirs of Salvation; the Apoſtle ſpeaketh not of them as elect, nor yet abſolutely as Believers; * their Election is ſecret, hid with God, the truth of their Faith may not be known to Angels, it is God alone that ſo ſearches as perfectly to know the hearts of men, and what their ſtates are; hence the Angels miniſter to the heirs of Salvation as appearing ſo to them. Now Infants, during their Infant-ſtate, are viſibly heirs of Salvation, or viſibly appear to be ſuch who ſhall be heirs of Salvation, as may further appear hereafter. And anſwerably the Angels in purſuance of their general commiſſion do miniſter to them, as eying them under that notion, *viz.* as heirs of Salvation; ſo that though I deny not, but elect Infants may have a more full benefit by this ſpecial providential care that our Lord Chriſt exerciſes over his own Family, than the Non-elect have: yet this I ſay, that the Infant-ſeed of Believers in general, or univerſally, being admitted viſible members of his Family, and appearing as heirs of Salvation, before they have made a forfeiture of their Covenant-intereſt, have an equal intereſt in the ſervice, and miniſtration of Angels, ſo far as that is performed according to their more general commiſſion, with the reſt of the members thereof, beſides many particular ſervices done by the Angels, according to particular directions from Chriſt, beyond what the reſt of mankind, yet ſtrangers to the Covenants of Promiſe, have.

* *Vide* Doctor Owen *in loco.*

2. Whether this ſpecial providential care of Chriſt

be not extended to Elect-Infants, born unto unbelievers, as well as to thoſe that are viſible members of his Church, and if ſo, then ſuch would have the ſame benefit, that they haye being admittted.

Anſw. It is not to be doubted, but that our Lord Chriſt knows who are his by election, as well as by vocation, and that he hath a reſpect to them as ſuch, antecedent to their Union with him, and admiſſion into the Church viſible; but yet let theſe three things be conſidered.

1. Firſt, That how far, or in what ſenſe ſoever the providential care of Chriſt is extended to, and exerciſed over ſuch, yet ſuppoſing the Infant-ſeed of Believers excluded from his Church and Family, that his care would be but particular, and not univerſal, it would reach only to the elect, and not to all their Seed, and conſequently the priviledge of the Seed of Believers would be greatly narrowed and leſſened beyond what now it is, yea, the Seed of Believers, as ſuch, would have no benefit by the ſpecial providential care of Chriſt, beyond what the Seed of others have, neither could their Parents take any comfort in, or make any improvement of the conſideration of their Seed's injoyment of this priviledge, in as much as they ſhould not then injoy it as their Seed, but only as elected, and who or whether any of their Seed were elected, each particular Believer would be uncertain.

2. Secondly, The caſe of Infants and of the adult in this regard is one and the ſame, no doubt, but our Lord Chriſt hath a reſpect to the Elect, whether in their infancy, or as grown up, beyond what he hath to others; and yet we find the Church, and that as viſible, greatly magnified, yea even admired on the account of this priviledge, *Oh Iſrael who is like unto thee,*

thee, a people ſaved by the Lord, the ſhield of thy help? Deut. 33. 29. It is primarily meant of this providential care that our Lord Chriſt exerciſeth over his Church as viſible, and what is ſaid of the Church in general, is true of, and applicable to each particular member, as ſharing in the common priviledges of the whole, and therefore

3. Thirdly, I anſwer, that neither Infants nor grown perſons, though as pertaining to the election of Grace, have an equal intereſt in, and benefit by this care of Chriſt, while *ſtrangers to the Commonwealth of Iſrael*, with thoſe that are actual members of that Common-wealth; it is *Iſrael*, that the *excellency of God is over*, Pſal. 68. 34. This will clearly appear in the caſe of *Ruth* the Moabiteſs, that ſhe appertained to the election of Grace, will not, as I ſuppoſe, be queſtioned by any, and yet ſhall we think ſhe had the ſame benefit by this ſpecial providential care of God over his Church, antecedent to her coming *to truſt under the wing of the God of Iſrael*, as *Boaz* ſpeaks in *Ruth* 2. 12. that ſhe had, after ſhe was actually come? what benefit then had ſhe in that reſpect, by her forſaking her own people, and joyning her ſelf with the people of God? And as I ſaid the caſe of Infants and of grown perſons is one and the ſame, ſo that this is no ſmall good or benefit that the Infant-ſeed of Believers have by their admiſſion into the viſible Church, above and beyond what the Seed of others that are without do injoy, that thereby they are brought under that ſpecial providential care that our Lord Chriſt does exerciſe over his Church, Kingdom or Family.

Queſt. 3. It may be farther inquired, wherein does the good or benefit of being under this providential

dential care of Chriſt conſiſt? what difference is put thereby, between the Infant-ſeed of Believers, and the Infant-ſeed of others?

Anſw. To that I ſhall only ſay in general, that it is a good and benefit to be under this care of Chriſt, cannot rationally be doubted of, by any who with their hearts believe, *that God hath raiſed him up from the dead, and given him to be the head over all things to the Church*, though the effects thereof be not always obvious unto ſenſe. Some indeed have not been aſhamed to put the queſtion, *where is the God of Judgment*? not being able to diſcern any difference in his providential diſpenſations towards the righteous and the wicked: But will any man, that is initiated in the School of Chriſt, and hath learned in any meaſure to walk by Faith, and not by Senſe, infer herefrom, that either there is no providential care exerciſed over the righteous, or that they have no benefit thereby? The non-appearing unto ſenſe of any difference between the Seed of Believers, and the Seed of unbelievers, is no rational ground for any to conclude, either that there is no ſuch ſpecial care extended to, or exerciſed over the former, or that they receive no benefit or advantage thereby, *The ways of God are in the Seas, his paths in the deep Waters; as for his footſteps they are not known*, Pſal. 77. 19. How many glorious deſigns does our Lord Chriſt carry on for the good of his Family, and the ſeveral members thereof, when yet, neither the time when the firſt foundation of them was laid, nor the various workings of Providence in their accompliſhment, is diſcerned or obſerved, either by the men of the World, yea, or by Saints themſelves? only when they are brought to their intended perfection, they give abundant

dant cauſe, to thoſe who reap the fruit of them, to admire and ſay, it was good for them that they ever had a place in that Kingdom or Family, *over which is the excellency of that God, who rideth upon the Heaven of Heavens, and whoſe ſtrength is in the Clouds.* Who, that hath any true knowledg of Chriſt, and hath his ſenſes at all exerciſed to diſcern between things that differ, would willingly be removed from under this ſpecial providential care of Chriſt, though it were to be ſet over the greateſt Empire in the World, yea though yet continued under that general providence, that extends to the whole Creation of God?

So that, not to deſcend to particulars, to be under the ſpecial providence of Chriſt muſt be granted to be a ſingular good by all thoſe that will not diſclaim Chriſtianity, and avow themſelves open Infidels.

Now, I ſay, the Infant-ſeed of Believers, as admitted into the viſible Church, Kingdom and Family of Chriſt, are under that ſpecial providential care he exerciſes over it; but now Parents by diſclaiming their Seed's intereſt in the Covenant, and refuſing on that account to admit them into the viſible Churh by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them, do, if not abſolutly, yet at leaſt what in them lyes, deprive them of this priviledge, and leave them under only that general and common providence, that is exerciſed over the dark places of the earth, that are full of the habitations of cruelty, and oh that men, yea that Chriſtians ſhould become ſo cruel to the fruit of their own bodies.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The good redounding to the Infant-ſeed of Believers from their admiſſion into, and memberſhip in the viſible Church, Kingdom, or Family of Chriſt, further opened in a third inſtance, viz. *They ſtand nigher than the reſt of Mankind to, and are the more eſpecial Objects of the Promiſes of ſaving Grace. Some of theſe Promiſes mentioned. The full Good contained in them unfolded. That the Seed of Believers, as members of the viſible Church, do ſtand nigher to them, than the reſt of Mankind, fully proved. An exaggeration of Parents evil in rejecting their Childrens Church-memberſhip.*

3. THirdly and eſpecially, the Infant-ſeed of Believers, as members of the viſible Church, ſtand nigher than the reſt of Mankind do ſo; and anſwerably are the more eſpecial objects of, the Promiſes of ſaving Grace. The Promiſes I have reference to, are ſuch as theſe, *Iſa.* 54. 13. *Jer.* 31. 31. That the very firſt ſpecial or ſaving Grace, I mean inherent or renewing Grace, whereby the Image of God is renewed in, and reinſtamped upon the ſoul, is originally from God, and not from Man himſelf, needs no other proof, than the bare recital of thoſe Scriptures

tures that affirm it, *John* 3. 3, 7. compared with *John* 1.13. *Epheſ.* 2.8,10. *James* 1.17,18. *&c.* That the Promiſes aforementioned, and unto which I have reference, do contain and hold forth ſaving Grace, and at leaſt that *Iſai.* 54. 13. the very firſt ſpecial or ſaving Grace, is ſufficiently evident from the words themſelves; ſo from the application our Lord Chriſt makes of that Promiſe in *John* 6. 44, 45. where we ſee our Lord Chriſt applyes theſe *teachings of God* to thoſe effectual teachings and drawings of the Father, whereby ſinners are brought to him, and which whoſoever do injoy, do actually come to him, and ſhal be *raiſed up by him at the laſt day*; that is, unto Life and Glory. And yet farther, that theſe Promiſes I now refer unto, have their accompliſhment in New-Teſtament-times, and that during the preſent adminiſtration, is undeniably ſecured both by our Lord Chriſt, and the Apoſtles interpretation and application of them: compare thoſe forecited Texts with *John* 6. 44, 45. *Heb.* 8. 11. So that as all ſpecial, or ſaving Grace, eſpecially that firſt, whereby the ſoul is drawn and united unto Chriſt, is originally from God; ſo theſe Promiſes do hold forth and aſſure that Grace unto ſome in New-Teſtament-times, during the preſent adminiſtration of the Covenant of Grace: Now, I ſay, the Infant-ſeed of Believers, as incorporated into the viſible Church by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them, do ſtand nigher to theſe Promiſes than the reſt of Mankind do, and are the more eſpecial Objects of them, and conſequently they have, and (were Parents faithful in the diſcharge of their duty) would more abundantly have their accompliſhment eſpecially among them. But that we may more clearly ſee, how great

a

a good and advantage the Seed of Believers in this reſpect have by their membership in the viſible Church, I ſhall do two things:

1. Firſt, ſhew more particularly what is the good that is contained in theſe Promiſes, and

2. Secondly, prove that the Seed of Believers do ſtand nigher to them, than the reſt of Mankind. To begin with the firſt, *viz.*

What the good contained in theſe Promiſes is: and that is twofold, the former implyed and preſuppoſed; the latter more plainly expreſſed.

Firſt, the good contained in theſe Promiſes is the vouchſafement of ſuch outward means, as are apt and ſufficient, according to the ordinary dealings of God with, and his ordinary wayes of working Grace in Men, inſtrumentally to convey Grace to, and work it in the heart: theſe means in the general are the outward communication or publication of the Doctrine of Redemption, and Salvation by Chriſt. The Doctrine of the Goſpel, declaring the way of Redemption and Salvation by Chriſt, as ſome ways communicated to the underſtanding, and applyed to the ſoul, is the means by, and through which God does ordinarily work Grace in thoſe, whoſe Salvation he intends; I mean it of ſuch whoſe capacities admit of their reception of Grace that way. Now when God promiſes Grace, he implicitely promiſes the means, by which it may, according to the ordinary way of his dealings with men, be wrought in thoſe intended in the Promiſes. But before I proceed, it may not be altogether unuſeful to remove one objection that may poſſibly ariſe in the minds at leaſt of ſome men.

Obj. Poſſibly it may be ſaid, Theſe Promiſes ſeem rather to exclude than include any external means;

for it is expreſsly ſaid, when theſe Promiſes come to have their accompliſhment, men ſhall not *teach every one his neighbour, or his brother, ſaying, know the Lord, they ſhall be all taught of God*, and that ſhall be the only teaching they ſhall have, or ſtand in need of.

Anſw. To this I ſhall only ſay two things.

Firſt, That the Promiſes of the Covenant of Grace have a gradual accompliſhment: they had a lower accompliſhment under the firſt Teſtament, they have a higher and more full accompliſhment under the New, during the preſent adminiſtration: what further intendment they may have, and how accompliſhed in the ages yet to come, is not without its difficulty to determine: Be ſure, in Heaven there ſhall be no need of outward means: *Promiſſiones novi fœderis inchoantur in hac vita, implentur autem in vita futura*, Cam. in *Heb.* 8. 11. And therefore

2. Secondly, Theſe words only note a more abundant pouring forth of the Spirit under the New Teſtament, beyond what was granted under the firſt: * and the meaning is only this, as if the Lord ſhould ſay, they ſhall not only be taught of men; but my Spirit ſhall accompany the teaching of men, by means whereof *they ſhall have my Law put in their minds, and written in their hearts, and ſhall know me from the leaſt to the greateſt.* And that the Spirit of God deſigned not the excluſion of outward means is ſufficiently evident from our Lord Chriſt's inſtituting the Goſpel-Miniſtry, at that very time to which theſe Promiſes had a direct reference

* *Non* ἐλλιπῶς *pro non ſolum frequenter accipitur, & in altero, quod per adverſitivam opponitur, quædam præeminentia præ priori intelligitur.* Glaſs.

reference, and were to have at leaſt a lower accompliſhment; the end of which Inſtitution, and the time of its duration, the Apoſtle expreſsly declares in *Eph.* 4. 11, 12, 13. So that though theſe Promiſes ſeem to exclude, yet they do indeed include, ſuch outward means, as whereby according to the ordinary way of God's working in, and upon men, the main good intended in them may be communicated to them. As when God commands any duty from men, that Command requires the due uſe and improvement of all means neceſſarily ſubſerving their performance of the duty commanded: ſo when he promiſes any good, eſpecially when the Promiſe is abſolute, as I conceive theſe are, in the promiſe of that good is included the neceſſary means of mans injoyment of it: ſo that when God promiſes that all the *Children* of his Church *ſhall be taught of him*, and that ſo, as *to know him from the greateſt to the leaſt*, and that he will *put his Laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts*, he does implicitely promiſe a ſufficiency of means, whereby the main Good intended may be communicated to them: and theſe means in the general, as I have ſaid, are the communication, or publication of the Doctrine of the Goſpel, at leaſt ſo far as is abſolutely and ſimply neceſſary to the working of a ſaving work of Grace in the heart. The various ways whereby the Doctrine of the Goſpel may be communicated unto men, whether young or old, are not neceſſary to be inſiſted upon.

The moſt proper and ordained way in reſpect of the Seed of Believers hath been already intimated to be Parental Inſtruction, though I ſhall not ſay, God hath confined himſelf to that way alone. But let it ſuffice to know in the general, that in theſe Promi-

ſes is included the vouchſafement of a ſufficiency of means, whereby theſe ſpiritual bleſſings may in an ordinary way be communicated to thoſe deſigned for their injoyment.

2. Secondly, The main and principal good intended in theſe Promiſes is the effectual operations of the Spirit of God in a concurrence with, and by thoſe means, together with their inſeparable Effects and Fruits, theſe Promiſes, both as at firſt given forth by thoſe two Prophets, and alſo as interpreted by Chriſt and the Apoſtle *Paul*, evidently intend ſome good beyond the bare vouchſafement of outward means; for otherwiſe they would aſſure of nothing, with reference to the ends whereunto they were given forth, beyond what was injoyed by the people of God under the Old Teſtament; they had then *the Oracles of God committed to them*, as well as the Church of God now hath; ſo that it muſt needs be, ſome good that is principally intended in theſe Promiſes, beyond what was vouchſafed to the Church under the Old-Teſtament-adminiſtration, and which does advance the New-Teſtament-adminiſtration to an excellency and glory above that of the Old, which can be nothing elſe, but the more plentiful effuſion of the Spirit of God, and his effectual Operations with their inſeparable Fruits and Effects, here declared to be the ſaving knowledg of God, the abiding of the Law in the mind, and its Inſcription in the heart. But let that ſuffice for the good intended in theſe Promiſes.

2. Secondly, That the Seed of Believers, as Members of the Church, ſtand nigher than the reſt of Mankind, (I mean, that are, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, without to) and are the more eſpecial Objects of theſe Promiſes: Now this will appear two ways.

1. Firſt,

1. Firſt more generally, from the conſideration of the more general Objects of them, and that is the Church, or Houſe of *Iſrael*, of which the Seed of Believers are Members; thus in that *Iſa.* 54. 13. *All thy Children ſhall be taught of God*: whoſe Children the Prophet ſpeaks of, is evident, as from the Contexr, ſo from that diſcourſe of the Apoſtle in *Gal.* 4. *ult.* they are the Children of *Jeruſalem which is from above*, that is the Goſpel-Church; and that it is meant of the Goſpel-Church as viſible, is evident from *Iſa.* 54. 11. It is the Church *toſſed to and fro with Tempeſt*, that is, Afflictions, Perſecutions, *&c.* which are only compatible to the Church as viſible. Now they are the Children of the Church, as ſo conſidered, that are the Objects of this Promiſe, *they ſhall be taught of God*, and that ſo, as to *know him from the leaſt to the greateſt*. Some indeed have underſtood by theſe Children, the natural Children of the Church, or of the Members of the Church: and though I doubt not, but that the Holy Ghoſt has a conſiderable reſpect unto them, yet I conceive not merely as ſuch, but as Members of the viſible Church, it being uſual in Scripture to ſpeak of the Church collectively taken, under the notion of a Mother, and the ſeveral Members under the notion of her Children: and that we are ſo to underſtand it in this place, is evident both from the Contexr, and that diſcourſe of the Apoſtle before mentioned; ſo that let it be granted that this Promiſe does not appertain to the Seed of Believers merely as ſuch; yet as the Covenant of Grace is extended to them, and they, by the Application of

ἢ ἐξ ἐθνων ἐκκλεσία. *Chryſoſt.*

And that he means the Church as viſible, is evident from what follows.

the Token thereof are admitted into the visible Church, so it does appertain, yea in a special manner appertains to them: so again in that *Heb.* 8. 11. the Covenant wherein these Promises *of putting the Law in the mind, and writing it in the heart*, are contained, as made with *the House of Israel*, and by House of *Israel*, we are again to understand the visible Church, that term House being frequently applyed to the visible, but never, as I remember, to the invisible Church, at least merely as such: Now the Seed of Believers being of this *House of Israel*, they have a joynt interest in this Covenant, and the Promises contained in it, with the whole House, and answerably stand nigher to, and are the more especial Objects of these Promises, than the rest of Mankind are, who are not of this House of *Israel*. Only let it be observed, that though the Church or House of *Israel* be the proper Object of these Promises, yet I would not be understood, as excluding all others from partaking of the good contained in them: for though the actual injoyment of that good be peculiar and proper to those that are of the Church or House of *Israel*; yet by the very vouchsafement of it, others that were without are converted and brought into it: those that God hath designed a place in his House, are effectually taught by him, and by means thereof, are brought into it: But though God does vouchsafe the good contained in these Promises to Forraigners as the means whereby they are brought into his House; yet they in a peculiar and special manner belong to his House, or to such as are already in his House, and consequently to the Seed of Believers as Members thereof.

Obj. But possibly some may say, If so be God hath made the Covenant with the Church as visible, and therein

therein hath promiſed not only the outward means of Grace, but the effectual operations of the Spirit in a concurrence with thoſe means; and conſequently ſaving Grace as the inſeparable Fruit of thoſe operations, and the Seed of Believers have this Covenant, with the Promiſes thereof extended unto them in common with the adult Members of the Church; then it may ſeem, either that God fails in making good his Covenant, or elſe we muſt ſay, they are all ſavingly taught of God, and have true Grace wrought in their hearts; and if ſo, we muſt neceſſarily hold falling from Grace.

Anſw. This Objection I have in part obviated already in a former Treatiſe; yet let me ſpeak a little more diſtinctly to it at preſent: and for a more full anſwer to it, we muſt diſtinguiſh of the Covenant thus; It is either made with the Church in general, or with particular Perſons, and anſwerably there are ſome Promiſes appertaining to the Church in general as a collective Body, and are to be interpreted, and underſtood in an indefinite notion; but then there are other Promiſes appertaining to particular Perſons, and are to be underſtood in a definite notion: and here we may obſerve a threefold difference between the Covenant as made with the Church in general, and the Promiſes of it as ſo made, and as made with particular Perſons, and the Promiſes of it as ſo made.

1. Firſt, There is a difference in reſpect of the good covenanted, or promiſed as thus: the Covenant, as made with the Church in general, contains Promiſes of the firſt ſaving or ſpecial Grace, as the Promiſes I have at preſent reference unto; theſe appertain to the Covenant as made with the Church in general: but now the Covenant as made with particular perſons contains

contains no Promiſes of the firſt Grace, but only of conſequential Grace, ſuch as the pardon of ſin, the indwelling preſence of the Spirit, and the like, and does preſuppoſe the firſt Grace already wrought as the condition of it on Man's part, as in the caſe of the Adult, or elſe does preſuppoſe the condition of it, ſome other way performed, as in the caſe of the Infant-ſeed of Believers, *viz.* by the Faith of their Parents.

2. Secondly, There is a difference in reſpect of the intereſt that Perſons have in, and title they have to it, and anſwerably in the way and manner of God's performing of it, or giving the good promiſed in it: as it is made with the Church in general, ſo none have a particular actual intereſt in, or title to it, as taken ſeverally by themſelves, they have only a more general intereſt in, and title to it as Members of that Collective Body with which it is made; but now, as made with particular Perſons, each one, with whom it is ſo made, hath an actual intereſt in, and title to it, as taken apart by themſelvrs, without reſpect had to their relation to the Church in general; and anſwerably as it is made with the Church in general, God hath reſerved a liberty to himſelf to, and anſwerably does make it good, or give the good promiſed to particular Perſons, according to the good pleaſure of his Will, in a complyance with his eternal Purpoſes, and Decrees. What may be objected againſt this, from the univerſality of the expreſſions, *they ſhall be all taught of God*, hath been anſwered elſewhere, to which I muſt refer the Reader. * But as it is made with particular Perſons, ſo it does infallibly ſecure the good covenanted and promiſed to each in particular, upon ſuppoſition

* Infant Baptiſm from Heaven. *p.* 59, 60, 61. ſo alſo *p.* 108, 109, 110, 111.

tion of a non-failure on their part in the performance of the duties required.

3. Thirdly, There is a difference in reſpect of the tenour of the Covenant and Promiſes thereof. As made with, or to the Church in general they are abſolute; but as made with or to particular Perſons, conditional. Yet let me ſay, that though the Promiſes of the Covenant, as made with the Church in general, are abſolute as to the Church, as ſo conſidered, that is, no Condition is impoſed upon the Church in general, or as collectively conſidered, in order to God's making good theſe Promiſes; yet that hinders not, but that ſomewhat of duty may be required of particular Members in order to their own or theirs injoying the good promiſed, in which failing, either themſelves, or theirs may be denyed that good, though yet the Promiſes ſhall have their accompliſhment, and others ſhall injoy the good of them, though they do not. But to return, having then diſtinguiſhed of the Covenant, and the Promiſes of it, the anſwer to the foregoing objection is this: That the Promiſes under our preſent conſideration do appertain to the Covenant as made with the Church in general, and anſwerably are to be interpreted, and underſtood in an indefinite notion, and have their accompliſhment among thoſe to whom in general they do appertain according to the good pleaſure of God, in a complyance with his eternal Purpoſes and Decrees.

Promiſes of a like nature with theſe frequently occur in Scripture, the conſideration of which, may farther clear up what hath been ſaid. See *Mark* 16. 17, 18. *John* 14. 12. which Promiſes, though they may ſeem to be definite as made to each particular Believer, yet are to be underſtood indefinitely, and have their accom-

accompliſhment, in that ſome have had a power of working Miracles, or in that ſuch a power hath been exerted in the Church, though poſſibly not in the fulneſs of it, by any one particular Believer: So in our preſent caſe, the Covenant as made with, and Promiſes as made to the Church or Houſe of *Iſrael*, as a Collective Body being indefinite, they do not infallibly ſecure the good contained in them to every individual Member, only ſuch a good to the Church in general, and anſwerably every individual Member ſtands nigher to, and is a more eſpecial object of them, than thoſe that are without.

And yet for the farther clearing up and confirming of what hath been ſaid, we may obſerve, that that twofold Good before mentioned, intended in theſe Promiſes, is diſtinctly promiſed to the Church as a Collective body.

1. Firſt, For the outward means of Grace thus, in that *Pſal.* 147. 17. *He hath ſhewed his Judgments unto* Jacob, *and his Statutes unto* Iſrael: *he hath not done ſo to every Nation.* I conceive we are to take theſe words, not barely as Hiſtorical of what God did for the Church of the Jews, but Promiſſory, wherein God does graciouſly ingage himſelf, to vouchſafe ſuch outward means to his Church throughout all ages, as ſhall be ſufficient through the concurring operations of the Spirit to convey the ſaving knowledg of himſelf in Chriſt to, and work Grace in the hearts of the ſeveral Members thereof; however, this ſeems evident, that the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks not of God's ſhewing his Judgments to *Jacob*, and Statutes to *Iſrael* as a Priviledge peculiar and proper to the Jewiſh Church, but as the Church of God, and anſwerably declares what is one of the great Priviledges of the Church

Church throughout all ages, *viz.* to injoy *the Oracles of God*, or the outward means of Grace: And hence it is, that the Apoſtle tells the *Jews*, as then not unchurched, that *it was neceſſary*, or of neceſſity, ἀναγκαῖον, that *the Goſpel ſhould be firſt preached unto them*, Acts 13. 46. and why was this neceſſary or of neceſſity, but becauſe they, yet appertaining to the viſible Church, ſhould, while they ſo continued, have a ſufficiency of outward means, whereby the ſaving Knowledg of God in Chriſt, and a work of Grace might be communicated to, and wrought in them, God having granted that to his Church as one of her great Priviledges here upon earth.

2. Secondly, For the effectual operations of the Spirit, with their inſeparable Fruits and Effects: and thus our Lord Chriſt hath promiſed the conſtant and perpetual preſence of the Spirit in, and with his Church, *I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever*, John 14. 16. We are not to underſtand this as a Promiſe to particular Believers; though in whomſoever the Spirit of God doth dwell, he dwells and abides for ever; yet of that indwelling preſence of the Spirit in the hearts of particular Believers I conceive our Lord Chriſt does not here ſpeak, but of his preſence in, and with his Church in general, in which ſenſe Chriſt is ſaid *to walk in the midſt of the golden Candleſticks*: Now the great end of the Spirit's preſence in, and with the Church is to make effectual by his internal operations the external means of Grace for the ends whereunto they are vouchſafed; ſo that we ſee the Promiſes of ſaving Grace, both of the external means whereby that Grace is wrought, and of the Spirit by whoſe operations thoſe means are made

effectual,

effectual, do in a particular and ſpecial manner appertain to the viſible Church, and conſequently the Seed of Believers being Members thereof, they muſt needs ſtand nigher to, and be more eſpecially the Objects of thoſe Promiſes, than the reſt of Mankind, who are *Aliens from the Commonwealth of Iſrael*: and ſurely it can be no ſmall benefit, or advantage to ſtand in ſo nigh a capacity to theſe Promiſes, to be of that Body, or Family to whom they do belong, though the good contained in them be not infallibly ſecured to every individual. To be of any Body Politick, Corporation or Society, unto which any peculiar Grants do belong, is looked upon as a great Priviledg and Advantage, though the Good granted be not infallibly ſecured to every individual Member; yet every one in particular is in a nigher and greater capacity to injoy that Good, than thoſe that are not of ſuch a Body, Corporation, or Society: the caſe is the ſame here.

2. But ſecondly, and more particularly: And thus we ſhall find, that theſe Promiſes do yet in a more eſpecial and peculiar manner belong to that part of, or ſpecies of Members in the viſible Church that conſiſts in the Seed of Believers: the Adult are ſuppoſed already to have the firſt Grace; and therefore, theſe Promiſes, at leaſt as they hold forth the firſt Grace, have a more eſpecial reſpect to the Seed of Believers: Hence we ſhall find Promiſes of that twofold Good before mentioned expreſsly and particularly made unto them: thus *Iſa.* 44. 4, 5. Sayes the Lord, *I will pour out my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my bleſſing upon thy Off-ſpring.* Seed and Off-ſpring here are ſynonimous terms, they intend the ſame Subjects, and by both the natural Seed of Believers is intended, as is evident, in as much as that term Off-ſpring is never

uſed

used in any other sense, than to signify natural Children or Posterity, and by Spirit and Blessing the same good is intended, only the latter term is explicative of the former, *I will pour out my Spirit and Blessing*, is as much as to say, I will pour out my Spirit, who, as poured out upon, shall be a blessing to them; and in this promise of the Spirit is implyed the vouchsafement of the outward means, through and by which God does pour out his Spirit upon his People. The Doctrine of the Gospel as some way communicated unto men, is the ministration of the Spirit to them; 2 *Cor.* 3. 8. And hence the Promise of the Spirit does necessarily imply, and include in it, such a communication of the Gospel, as through which, according to the ordinary way of God's dealing with men, the Spirit may be ministred to those to whom the Promise doth appertain: and as the Spirit is here expressly promised to the Seed of Believers, and the outward means of Grace implyed therein, so in *Isa.* 59. *ult.* this twofold good is expressly, and *in terminis* promised, *My Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy Seed, nor out of the mouth of thy Seed's Seed, from henceforth, and for ever, saith the Lord.* It is a promise made to the universal Church, and declares the way, and means how, and whereby God does uphold, maintain and perpetuate his Church in the World, it is by vouchsafing his Word, or the outward means of Grace, and his Spirit in a concurrence with them, to his People, and their Seed successively from one generation to another. To those that consider the nature of these Promises, or that they are tobe interpreted and understood not in a definite, but in an indefinite notion, and do impartially

partially obſerve the way of God's procedure in the diſpenſation of his Grace towards men, any endeavours to vindicate the Faithfulneſs of God in their performance would be needleſs and ſuperfluous; for though ſome have contemned that obſervation that others have made, *viz.* that that Seed that God hath reſerved out of the poſterity of fallen man to ſerve him, is in a conſiderable meaſure raiſed out of the Families of the Faithful, yet it is indeed of great weight, and ſo evident to unbyaſſed Obſervers, that it may be no little confirmation of the ſenſe and meaning now given of theſe Promiſes, and is an abundant vindication of the Truth and Faithfulneſs of God in them.

And as it hath in all ages paſt given, ſo ſtill gives him the juſt Name and Repute of a God *keeping Covenant and Mercy for ever*. But to put a cloſe to this third Benefit that the Seed of Believers have by their Memberſhip in the viſible Church, I ſay they are thereby brought nigher to the Promiſes of ſaving Grace, than the reſt of Mankind are; they are of that Collective Body or Society of men unto whom theſe Promiſes do in the general appertain; and not only ſo, but are that ſpecial part of, or ſpecies of Members in that Body or Society, to whom theſe Promiſes in a more eſpecial manner do belong: they are nigh to the Promiſes as they are of the viſible Church, but they are yet nigher, as they are ſpecified and pointed out to be the Perſons peculiarly intended in them: and according to their nighneſs to theſe Promiſes, ſo eſpecially, when Parents are faithful in their duty towards them, is their injoyment of the good promiſed. How rarely is it found when Parents with *Abraham* are faithful in inſtructing, *and commanding their*

Children

Children to walk in way of the Lord; but if not all, yet ſome, (though ſometimes more ſometimes fewer, according to the number they are bleſſed with) are found through the bleſſing of God accompanying of thoſe inſtructions walking in theſe ways; yea, how many inſtances might be given of Parents ſo performing their duty, who can walk in the World, as in a ſtrange land with comfortable hopes that all theirs are *heirs with them of the ſame Promiſes?*

Now then, how ſtrange is it that believing Parents ſhould have their underſtandings ſo far darkened, and their Judgments ſo far blinded, to make that which ſometimes was the Gentiles, and is now the Jewes miſery, (viz. *to be far from God, and ſtrangers to the Covenants of Promiſe*) their choice, though not for themſelves, yet for theirs; and ſhould, what in them lies, ſet them at the utmoſt diſtance from thoſe Promiſes that are the great grounds of hope to fallen Man, that he may obtain an exchange of his Sin and Miſery for Grace and Glory, and leave them to take their Lot among thoſe that are afar off? We may well call to the Heavens *to be aſtoniſhed at this, and to the Earth to be moved out of its place.* But to paſs from this firſt Head of Benefits accruing to the Seed of Believers: From the application of the token of the Covenant to them they have admiſſion into, and become Members of the Church viſible; and God by commanding the Application of the Token of the Covenant to the Seed of his People, ſpeaks to them with reſpect to their Seed, as *Jacob* to *Joſeph* with reference to his two Sons, *Bring your Children near to me that I may bleſs them*: bring them into my Houſe and Family, and as they then ſhall have an intereſt in all the Prayers put up for it; ſo they ſhall have the ſpecial providen-

tial care of my Son over them, he ſhall give his Angels a charge concerning them, they ſhall come into a nigher capacity to injoy Grace promiſed, than the reſt of Mankind; and be you faithful in your duties, and I will be faithful in my Promiſes. Now ſhall any reject ſuch a Gracious Invitation, how juſtly may Children curſe the day they were ever brought forth by ſuch Parents?

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The second Good or Benefit accruing to the Seed of Believers by the Application of the Token of the Covenant proposed, viz. *They have thereby the Covenant, with the Promises thereof appertaining to them, ratified sealed and confirmed. An Enquiry made, whether the Covenant and Promises are entred with, and made to the Seed of Believers, definitly or only indefinitly. The various judgments of Pædo-Baptists about it. That they are entred and made definitely, proved two wayes. First, In the instance of* Abraham's *Seed immediatly proceeding from his own Loyns: where two Reasons are offered. Secondly, It is further proved by three Reasons respecting both* Abraham's *and all other Believers Seed. The forementioned good accruing to the Seed of Believers opened in the resolution of two Questions. The former proposed,* viz. *What the Token of the Covenant has reference unto. That it has a twofold reference shewed. First, To the Covenant as abstractly and absolutely considered. The thing ratified, sealed and confirmed by it,*

as considered in that its reference, determined to be their Covenant. That the necessary result of which is proved by two Arguments to be their discharge from the guilt and condemning power of Original sin, and that both Originans *and* Originatum.

2. THe second Good or Benefit, that the Seed of Believers have by the Application of the Token of the Covenant, is this, *viz.* They have thereby the Covenant with the Promises thereof appertaining to them sealed and confirmed to them. But before I proceed to a particular unfolding of this Good or Benefit, it may not be unuseful, but seems necessary, that I should give a brief account of the different apprehensions of Pædo-Baptists themselves about the nature of the Covenant and Promises, as entred with, and made to the Infant-seed of Believers; for that they are not all of one mind and judgment about that must be granted: And according to their different apprehensions about the nature of the Covenant and Promises, they are differently perswaded as to the Good accruing to Infants by their Covenant-interest, and their having the Token of the Covenant applyed to them, which I shall also briefly take notice of as I go along.

1. First, Some conceive that the Covenant is entred with the Seed of Believers only indefinitly, and answerably that the Promises appertaining to them are to be interpreted and understood in an indefinite notion; that is, as having a respect to them as generally and collectively considered, but not made to any of them in particular. And of those that go this

way,

way, some conceive that the Covenant and Promises appertain only to the Elect, and secure to them only the future injoyment of all the saving Fruits and Benefits purchased by Christ; but do not necessarily convey to, or confer upon them any of those Fruits or Benefits for the present, and consequently, that by the Application of the Token of the Covenant, only *Jus ad rem*, not *Jus in re* is sealed and confirmed: But others conceive that as the Covenant and Promises thereof have only an indefinite respect to the Seed of Believers, so that at least some of them have those saving Benefits and Blessings actually granted to and conferred upon them, and consequently that they are actually regenerated, and have a full and compleat Union with Christ, the Remission of sins, the Love and Favour of God, *&c.* And some having these Benefits and Blessings actually conferred upon them in their Infancy, we are to presume it may be so with each one in particular; and on that ground are to apply the Token of the Covenant to them universally. And this Opinion, could it be clearly proved from Scripture, would free the Controversie about Infant Baptism from many difficulties it must be confest it is otherwise attended with: And on that account I should readily comply with it: but for the reasons after to be given, I cannot, but at present lay it aside *cum pace tantorum virorum.*

2. Secondly, others conceive that the Covenant is entred with the Seed of Believers definitely, and answerably that the Promises appertaining to them are to be interpreted and understood in a definite notion; and consequently, that as the Covenant, as at first established with *Abraham*, did extend to *Ishmael*, as well as to *Isaac*, so is still continued to all Believers,

and each one of their Seed in particular. And some of these that go this way conceive, that all the Infants of Believers have true Grace, in particular true Faith, wrought in them either antecedent to the Application of the Token of the Covenant, or at the time of its Application, if not by, yet in a concurrence with it. But this opinion necessarily inferring a possibility to lose, and fall from the truth of Grace, is rejected by the generality of Protestants, especially that bear the denomination of *Calvinists*.

Yet some grant, yea assert some kind of supernatural Operations of the Spirit to antecede, at least accompany the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them, whereby at least a *posse agere*, or some dispositions facilitating their saving acting of Grace are wrought. But others distinguish of the Covenant: it is say they, *internum, aut externum*, it is either Internal, or External: by the Internal Covenant, they seem to mean the Covenant as really and truly entred with the Elect, ensuring to them Grace and Glory: by the External Covenant they seem to mean the Covenant as visibly appearing to be made with Men, whether Infants, or Adult, when as it is not indeed really entred mutually between God and them. This latter way of God's entring Covenant with Men, whether young or old, is expressed by some, by entring Covenant with them in or according to an Ecclesiastical Dispensation, that is, as they express themselves in a visible Church-way.

Again others, and sometimes the same Men distinguish of the Good contained in and conveyed by the Promises of the Covenant appertaining to the Seed of Believers: it is, say they, either Spiritual and Saving, or else only External and Ecclesiastical; as Member-

ship

ſhip in the viſible Church, a right to the outward Ordinances and Priviledges of the Church, and the like. And they conceive that the Covenant, as containing ſaving Spiritual Mercies, only appertains to the Elect; but, as containing External Eccleſiaſtical Priviledges, it appertains to all the Seed of Believers: hence they call it, as entred with them, a Covenant of Priviledges. This latter Opinion concerning the definiteneſs of the Covenant I take to be according to truth, though to diſtinguiſh either of the Covenant, or the good contained in it, as entred with, or extended to Infants, I ſee no ground, neither do I think it is at all neceſſary; but I ſay, as to the nature of the Covenant, I doubt not, but that it is entred with, and extended to the Infant-ſeed of Believers definitely, and anſwerably that the Promiſes appertaining to them are to be interpreted and underſtood in a definite notion, as appertaining equally and alike to each one in particular: I ſpeak of the Covenant and Promiſes, as entred with and made to the Seed of Believers merely as ſuch. There are, it's true, ſome Promiſes of the Covenant appertaining unto them, which are to be interpreted and underſtood in an indefinite notion, as has been afore declared; but thoſe appertain not to them merely as the Seed of ſuch Parents, but as Members of the viſible Church, as was there ſhewed: But now for the Covenant as extended to them as the Seed of believing Parents, ſo it is extended to them definitely, and anſwerably the Promiſes of the Covenant appertaining to them are to be interpreted, and underſtood in a definite notion. This I have in part proved already, yet I ſhall add ſomewhat more for the further confirmation of it.

Infant Baptiſm from Heaven. Book 1. Chap. 2.

it. And it may be, as I conceive, proved two ways.

1. In the Instance of *Abraham*'s natural Children, proceeding immediatly from his own Loyns.

2. By some further Reasons equally respecting *Abraham*'s, and all other Believers Infant-seed.

1. Let us see it in that particular instance of *Abraham*'s Infant-seed; and thus I shall only offer these two reasons, beyond what I have given in the Treatise forecited.

1. Unless the Covenant had been entred definitely with *Abraham*'s natural Seed, immediatly proceeding from his own Loyns, there had been no rational ground for *Ishmael*'s Circumcision. That Circumcision was the Token of the Covenant is expressly asserted by the Lord himself; and answerably that the Application of it did presuppose the Subjects to whom it was to be applyed to be in Covenant, at least according to visible appearance, or according to a rational Judgment of Charity, is above any rational doubt evident. This I have also proved elsewhere. But now unless the Covenant did extend unto *Ishmael* in particular, there was no appearance at all of his being in Covenant, but an undenyable discovery of the contrary, and that from the mouth of God himself: By promising *Abraham* a Son of *Sarah*, and that, as the Mother of that Son, she should be a Mother of Nations, he did set aside *Ishmael*, and exclude him from the number of those that should inherit the Good promised, and was so understood by *Abraham*, which was the ground of his prayer for him, and is accordingly interpreted by the Apostle, in that *Rom.* 9. 8. Hence had not the Covenant extended to *Ishmael* in particular, there had been no ground for the Application of Circumcision to him, especially under that

notion,

notion, *viz.* As the Token of the Covenant, under which notion it was yet applyed to him; he could not be looke upon as an Heir designed to inherit the Good of the Promise now made; much less to have true Grace already wrought in him, seing he was excluded by God himself from inheriting the Good promised. The rationality of God's extending the Covenant to him, and granting the Token of it, when yet he intended not that he should inherit the Good promised, is no way difficult to declare, but is not necessary here to be insisted upon. It is enough to our present purpose that he was in particuler taken into Covenant as well as *Isaac*, and as the Covenant was entred with *Abraham* and his natural Seed; so it is entred with all Believers, and their natural Seed.

2. This is further evident, because under this term *Seed* in the Promise, *Abraham*'s mystical Seed was intended and included with his natural; this the Apostle expresly declares, *Gal.* 3. 16. Hence look under what notion the Covenant was made with the one species or sort of his Seed, in the same notion it was made with the other: but now it is undenyable, that, as made with his mystical Seed, it is to be interpreted and understood definitly, and answerably was so made with his natural Seed. We may suppose all *Abraham*'s mystical Seed, as well as his natural, then actually existing (as in the sight of God they were, to whom things future are present,) and now standing with *Abraham* in the presence of God, and apprehend him as speaking to him with reference to them all, *I will be thy God, and the God of all these that are thy Seed*: Now how can we without warrant from Scripture, as here we have none, interpret or understand him as promising to one species or sort of this

this Seed of *Abraham* definitely, that he would be a God to them; but to the other only indefinitely: So that as without great prejudice to the Faith and Comfort of Saints we cannot interpret the Promiſe as extending unto them only in a definite notion: So not without great violence to the Text can we interpret it as intending *Abraham's* natural Seed any otherwiſe then we do as intending his myſtical Seed. Hence whatever difficulties may be ſuppoſed to attend our expounding the Promiſe in a definite notion as extending to the natural Seed of Believers, the ſame difficulties did attend it as ſo made to *Abraham's* natural Seed; and yet that it was ſo made to them, ſeems evident from the reaſons now given, taken in conjunction with what has been formerly argued.

2. But ſecondly let me yet further offer ſome Reaſons equally reſpecting *Abraham's*, and all other Believers Seed: and I ſhall not produce all thoſe Reaſons which offer themſelves to ſerve in the deſign in hand; I ſhall only ſingle out theſe three, which I conceive ſufficient to confirm what is now aſſerted.

1. If the Promiſes of the Covenant were only made indefinitely to the Seed of Believers, then there would be in variety of inſtances an abſolute failure on God's part in the performance of them: This appears thus, as indefinite Promiſes do not infallibly ſecure the Good contained in them to every individual Perſon to whom in common with others they do appertain: So they do infallibly ſecure that Good, at leaſt to ſome one, if not more, of thoſe to whom in general they are made. Suppoſe a man come to another and ſay, I will do good, or I will be bountiful to you and to your Children; ſuppoſe he ſhould do good or be bountiful according to the utmoſt intent of the promiſe

miſe only to the man himſelf, but wholly neglect, or do no good at all to any one of his Children; he would hardly be accounted a man faithful to his Promiſe: the Promiſe being only an indefinite Promiſe, would not its [illegible] oblige him to do good or extend his bounty to every individual Child, yet to ſome one or more it would. But now that all Believers have ſome one or more of their Seed immediatly proceeding from their own Loyns partaking with them in the Spiritual and ſaving Benefits and Bleſſings of the Covenant of Grace, I ſuppoſe cannot be affirmed; the contrary is too evident in ſeveral inſtances; and how God with reſpect to ſuch can be ſaid to be a God keeping Covenant, I cannot apprehend, ſuppoſing the Promiſes be only indefinite.

2. If the Promiſes appertaining to the Seed of Believers were only indefinite, then they would pertain to them when Adult, yea, let their ways and practices be what they will, as well as while in their Infancy; and anſwerably it may ſeem they would have the ſame right to the Token of the Covenant then, that they have in their Infant-ſtate. That the Promiſes would equally and alike appertain to them when Adult, as when Infants, yea let their ways and practices be what they will, muſt as I conceive be neceſſarily granted: for they appertain to them either as the Seed of ſuch Parents, or as performing the condition of the Covenant themſelves: not the latter, for then none of the Seed of Believers would have an intereſt in them till themſelves had Grace; and conſequently Grace would not be given in a purſuance of the Promiſes, but muſt precede their intereſt in them: and therefore they muſt needs appertain to them as the Seed of ſuch Parents; and conſequently muſt neceſ-

ſarily

ſarily appertain to them while they are ſuch, which they are when grown up, as well as when Infants, be their lives and converſations what they will: and while the Promiſes appertain to them, eſpecially while they viſibly and apparently appertain to them, they ſeem evidently to have a right to the Token of the Covenant.

Obj. And if any ſhall ſay, that will not follow; for the Promiſes of the Covenant may indefinitely appertain to thoſe, who yet by their wickedneſs may forfeit their right to the Token of the Covenant, in as much as their right to it does ſuppoſe them to have the truth of Grace.

Anſw. To that I would ſay two things.

1. That I conceive, that it is intereſt in the Covenant and Promiſes thereof that gives right to the Token: *Be Baptized, for the Promiſe is to you and to your Children,* ſaith the Apoſtle, *Acts* 2. 38, 39. He ſeems evidenly to ground his Exhortation to them to be Baptized, upon their intereſt in the Promiſes. But for this ſee more in my firſt Treatiſe concerning Infant-Baptiſm, *Pag.* 263. *&c.*

2. That in reſpect of the Seed of Believers, ſuppoſing the Promiſe indefinitly appertaining to them, it may be charitably hoped they may have the truth of Grace, and conſequently a real Union with Chriſt, though greatly apoſtatizing from the ways of Grace and Holineſs, and at preſent walking in the ways of ſin and ungodlineſs: This hope may be rationally grounded upon the Promiſe appertaining to them (I ſpeak upon that ſuppoſition, that they do appertain to them indefinitely, and that God in a purſuance of them does ſo frequently work Grace in the hearts of the Seed of his People, as is a rational ground for the

Application

Application of the Token of the Covenant to them univerſally in their Infancy with reſpect to Grace already wrought) taken in conjunction with the indubitable experiences of all ages, that thoſe who have a real work of Grace may greatly apoſtatize from the ways of Grace and Holineſs, and ſometims be found walking, and that for a great while (how long 'tis hard to ſay) in the ways of ſin and ungodlineſs, is paſt all rational doubt in variety of inſtances; as that of *Solomon* and others. And if ſo be this ſuppoſition, that God has wrought Grace in this or that Infant, be a ſufficient ground to apply the Token of the Covenant to them in their Infancy; why may not the ſame Judgment of Charity be exerciſed towards the ſame Perſons, as grown up, though at preſent greatly apoſtatized from the ways of Grace and Holineſs, and ſuppoſing the Promiſes alike appertaining to them, as they did in their Infancy, and the ſame Judgment of Charity to be exerciſed towards them as may be exerciſed during their Infant-ſtate? Though it be granted their caſe be more doubtful, yet I ſay it will be hardly proved by Scripture that they ought not to have the Token of the Covenant applyed to them; and yet to grant them this Priviledge, their caſe being as now put, will be attended with no ſmall inconveniency.

3. If the Promiſes are made only indefinitely to the Seed of Believers, then they ſeem evidently to appertain alike to their mediate as to their immediate Seed. In *Abraham*'s caſe 'tis undeniable, that, as taken in an indefinite notion, they did equally and alike appertain to his Seed and Poſterity mediately deſcended from him, as to his immediate Seed: neither had his immediate Seed any other intereſt in them then his mediate. Now the Apoſtle tells us expreſsly *that the*

bleſſing

bleſſing of Abraham *is come upon believing Gentiles*; or ſuppoſe we can from any Scripture-warrant limit the Promiſes as made only to the immediate Seed of Believers under the New Teſtament, yet ſeeing we cannot limit them to *Abraham*'s immediate, but muſt grant them equally and alike to reſpect, and be extended to his mediate as to his immediate Seed, it will certainly follow, that all the Seed of the *Jews* to this very day, have an equal and alike intereſt in the Promiſes that *Iſaac* and *Jacob* and the reſt of both *Abraham*'s and *Iſaac*'s Children had. And if ſo, I conceive, no reaſon can poſſibly be aſſigned, why the ſame Judgment of Charity may not be exerciſed towards theſe, as was exerciſed towards them; and conſequently they would be as due and proper Subjects of the Token of the Covenant as they were, and ought to have it applyed unto them: And if ſo be we cannot limit the Promiſe to the immediate Seed of Believers, as I much think we cannot, in caſe we grant them to be only indefinitely made to *Abraham*'s natural Seed; then there will be laid a fair ground for the Application of the Token of the Covenant, which now is Baptiſm, to all Infants univerſally, as may be eaſily ſhewed if neceſſary. But I ſhall not inlarge upon this. Theſe reaſons convince me paſt all rational contradiction, that the Covenant and Promiſes thereof neither were entred with, nor made to either the natural Seed of *Abraham*, or any other Believers in a mere indefinite notion: but however God might have and ſtill has a more general reſpect both to *Abraham*'s and all Believers Seed mediately deſcending from them reſpectively; yet as entred with and made both to his and their immediate Seed; ſo they are to be interpreted and underſtood in a definite notion,

reaching

reaching and taking in each one of their Seed in particular. This Question being resolved, I shall now proceed to the Application and unfolding of this second Benefit assigned to the Infant-seed of Believers by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them: and here two things are to be enquired into.

1. What the Token of the Covenant has reference to; or what it is that is ratified sealed and confirmed to Infants thereby.

2. Wherein the Good Benefit and Advantage of having that (whatever it be) that the Token of the Covenant hath reference unto, ratified sealed and confirmed by an outward Sign and Token does consist.

1. For the first, And thus the Token of the Covenant has a double reference. First, To the Covenant it self, as more generally and absolutely considered. Secondly, To the particular Promises contained in it.

1. I say, the Token has reference to the Covenant it self, as absolutely and more generally considered: And hence, that which is firstly and primarily ratified sealed and confirmed to Infants (and the same is true of the Adult) by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them, is the Covenant it self, as more generally and absolutely considered; and consequently, and as the immediate and necessary result thereof, that which is Ratified and Confirmed is their Covenant-state. They are (as I may so speak) solemnly invested and setled in a Covenant-state with God; they are absolutely *de presenti* removed from under the first Covenant entred with all Mankind in *Adam*, and solemnly invested with, and initiated into a new Covenant-state. Hence Circumci-

sion

sion (and the same is true of Baptism) is said to be *the Token of the Covenant*, as absolutely considered, *Gen.* 17. 11. as the one had, so the other has a first and primary respect and reference to the Covenant as absolutely taken; and consequentially to the state of those that are taken into Covenant; they are thereby solemnly put, and setled in a new Covenant-state and relation Godward: though I deny not, but that the new Covenant or Covenant of Grace is conditionally made with all, or rather offered to Mankind; there is an offer and tender of Christ with all his Benefits to all men upon condition of Faith and Repentance: *Go*, says Christ, *preach the Gospel to every Creature: he that believes and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believes not, shall be damned*, in that *Mark.* 16. 15, 16. But *conditionale nihil ponit in esse.* A conditional Covenant, though it makes a great alteration in the cases of Men, they are not now under a necessity of standing or falling according to the tenour or terms of the first Covenant; yet that does not change their state, they are yet Heirs of the curse denounced in case of the transgression of that Covenant; they are yet *Children of wrath, the wrath of God abideth upon them*, John 3. 36. * But the Seed of Believers are actually received into the Covenant of Grace, solemnized, ratified and confirmed by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them: and from this change in their states I conceive a discharge and immunity from the condemning power of Original sin, whether *originans* or *originatum*, does necessarily arise

* *Non dixit ira Dei veniet ad eum, sed ira Dei manet super eum. Omnes qui nascimur mortales habent secum iram Dei. Quam iram Dei? quam excepit primus homo* Adam. August. in loco.

ariſe and reſult unto them. How far or in what ſenſe Mankind in general is freed from the ſanction of the firſt Covenant by the new Covenant, as made conditionally with all Men, is not abſolutely neceſſary for me to determine, and I ſhall endeavour to wave all controverſies excentrical to my preſent deſign: this ſeems evident, that however others are, yet all thoſe that are actually under the Covenant of Grace, as definitely entred with them, are *de preſenti* freed from it, ſeing there is an abſolute inconſiſtency between being under the Law, and under Grace, at one and the ſame time. The Apoſtle, *Rom.* 6. 14. ſets theſe two States in a direct antitheſis or oppoſition the one to the other; whether we underſtand by Law here, the Moſaical Law, or the Law as given at Mount *Sinai*, wherein there was a revival of the Law of Works made with *Adam* in innocency, or that firſt Law or Covenant as ſo made with *Adam*; yet by Grace I conceive we muſt underſtand the Covenant of Grace, and then 'tis all one as to my preſent purpoſe: no man can be under two Covenants that are in nature or kind directly oppoſite the one to the other, at one and the ſame time. Hence I ſay, the Infants of Believers, being under the Covenant of Grace, they muſt needs be ſet free from the firſt Covenant in the ſame ſenſe that all Believers are: and as for the Covenant of Grace that threatneth condemnation againſt none but either final rejecters of it, as in the caſe of thoſe that are yet ſtrangers to it, or total and final violators of it, as in caſe of thoſe that are actually under it, and being free from the ſanction of the firſt Covenant, and not under any obligation to ſuffer future condemnation, either as rejecters, or violators of the ſecond, I conceive their immunity

from the condemning power of Original ſin, yea of whatever ſin, whether Original or Actual they fall under the guilt of, during their pure Infant-ſtates, muſt neceſſarily enſue, though no expreſs Promiſe of pardon (which I conceive it is not neceſſary to enquire after) ſhould appertain unto them, *ceſſante obligatione legis & non obligante novo fœdere*, there can be no condemnation to them on the account of any ſin chargeable upon them. The ſum of what has been ſaid may be reduced into this Argument.

Arg. 1. All thoſe that are neither under the curſe of the Law, nor under the curſe threatned in the firſt Covenant, nor condemnable by the Covenant of Grace, muſt needs be free from the condemning power of Original ſin, yea of any ſin they are at preſent chargeable with: but ſuch is the caſe of the Infant-ſeed of Believers, during their pure Infant-ſtate: therefore during that ſtate, they are free from the condemning power of Original ſin, yea of whatſoever ſin they, during that ſtate, are chargeable with.

The *major* Propoſition will be readily granted on all hands, ſeeing ſin, be it Original or Actual, receives its power to condemn, or has its *ſtrength*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, from ſome Law or Covenant under which the Perſon guilty is; as where *there is no Law, there is no tranſgreſſion*: So where the Law threatens not condemnation, there is no condemnation; and condemnation muſt be either threatned in the Covenant of Works, or the Covenant of Grace: Hence if neither of theſe Laws or Covenants threaten condemnation unto men for any ſin they are guilty of, their ſin has not power to condemn them, or they muſt needs be free from the condemning power of any ſin they are guilty of. So that I conceive the *major* Propoſition

ſtands

ſtands firm. For the *minor*, that is evident from what has been already ſaid: the Law threatens not condemnation to the Infant-ſeed of Believers, becauſe they are not under it; they are freed from the ſanction of it, wherein future death is threatned. The Covenant of Grace threatens not condemnation to them, becauſe they are neither Rejecters nor Violators of it: but on the other hand, the conditions of it are performed, though not by them, yet on their behalf, which the Covenant accepts as though performed by themſelves in their own perſons. Whence the Concluſion is undeniable. Again, that the Infant-ſeed of Believers are freed from the condemning power of Original ſin, may be proved thus.

Arg. 2. All thoſe that are under the condemning power of any ſin, are in a ſtate of enmity with God, or have God as an enemy to them: but the Infant-ſeed of Believers are not in ſuch a ſtate, neither have they God as an enemy to them; therefore they are not under the condemning power of any ſin, and conſequently not of Original ſin.

The *major* Propoſition is evident thus: God is only ſaid to be an enemy unto Men, as he is obliged either in reſpect of his Eſſential Juſtice, or ſome Law given to, or Covenant made with him to puniſh according to the due deſert of ſin. God is not an enemy to Man merely as Man; nor yet merely as vitiated and corrupted with ſin; for then he ſhould be an enemy to all Men; yea to the regenerate as well as the unregenerate: but he is an enemy as under an obligation to puniſh according to the due deſert of ſin. Hence, he is an enemy to all thoſe, and to thoſe only, whom he is according to their preſent ſtates and conditions obliged ſo to puniſh. Now while any are

under the condemning power of ſin; that is, have the guilt of ſin remaining upon them, God is under an obligation to puniſh them according to the due deſert of their ſin; I ſay, he is ſo while the guilt of their ſin remains upon them, guilt being removed that obligation ceaſeth. How God may be under ſuch an obligation, and yet give Faith and Repentance whereby that guilt may be removed, is obvious to all, and need not here be declared: but I ſay, while guilt remains, while ſin has a power to condemn, God ſtands related as an enemy unto Men, or they are in a ſtate of enmity with him. But now, which is our *minor* Propoſition, the Infant-ſeed of Believers are not in ſuch a ſtate. This is not only evident from what has been already ſaid, but from the abſolute inconſiſtency between a ſtate of enmity, and that mutual relation between God and them, as he is their God, and they his People, of which more by and by. Now then the Premiſes being true, the Concluſion is certain.

I might further argue from the ſpecial reference, that the Token of the Covenant, whether Circumciſion or Baptiſm, had and has to the remiſſion and pardon of ſin. Circumciſion is ſaid to be a Seal of the righteouſneſs of Faith, which at leaſt includes the remiſſion of ſin. Saith the Apoſtle *Peter* to theſe awakned *Jews*, *Be baptized for the remiſſion of ſin*, Acts 2. *Ariſe and be baptized, and waſh away thy ſins*, ſays *Ananias* to *Paul*, Acts 22. 16. Now the Token of the Covenant having ſuch a particular and ſpecial reference to the pardon and remiſſion of ſin, it may (ſuppoſe it will not demonſtrate it it ſelf, yet) much confirm us in this truth, that the Infant-ſeed of Believers are freed from the guilt and condemning power

of

of that ſin they are guilty of, and have that (if not directly, yet) conſequently ſealed and confirmed to them by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them. And that the Infant-ſeed of Believers have this Good or Benefit, *viz.* Immunity from the condemning power of Original ſin, ſealed and confirmed to them by the Token of the Covenant, is not only according to the judgments of the generality, if not univerſality of all the Ancients, but of many of our Modern Divines, as the *Lutherans*, the Divines of the Synod of *Dort*, with many others, is ſo commonly known, that to produce particular teſtimonies is wholly needleſs.

CHAP. VI.

The second reference of the Token of the Covenant declared, where two Questions are resolved. First, What Promises appertain to the Seed of Believers as such. These determined to be only two. First, That God will be a God to them. Secondly, That they shall be saved. The second Question, (viz.) *What is the Good contained in these Promises. The Good contained in the latter more briefly shewed. The Good contained in the former, more largely insisted upon. A twofold Good determined to be contained in it. First, A Covenant-relation is constituted by it between God and the Seed of Believers. Secondly, God by it has put himself under an obligation to communicate himself to, and act for their Good and Benefit. Those communications of himself to, and these actings for their Good and Benefit that God has obliged himself to, shewed to be limited three ways. Where it is shewed, that this Promise of God's being a God to his People, whether Infants or Adult, does not, as taken absolutely and by it self, either for the present*

confer,

confer, or for the future abſolutely enſure, any particular Good contained in any of the Promiſes of the Goſpel upon, or to any intereſted in it; but is only an obligation upon God to make them all good according to their true tenour, and upon ſuppoſition of their condition being performed by man. This proved more generally by one Argument. That confirmed in the ſeveral branches of it.

2. AS the Covenant as abſtractly conſidered, and conſequentially their Covenant-ſtate, with a full diſcharge and freedom from the guilt and condemning power of Original ſin, as the inſeparable and neceſſary effect and conſequence thereof, is ratified, ſealed and confirmed to the Infant-ſeed of Believers by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them: So the particular Promiſes of the Covenant appertaining to them, are alike ſealed and confirmed to them thereby. Now here two things muſt be enquired into.

Firſt, What Promiſes of the Covenant do appertain to them.

Secondly, What is the proper good contained in, and anſwerably conferred upon, or aſſured to them by thoſe Promiſes.

For the firſt, I find only theſe two Promiſes made unto them, merely as the Seed of ſuch Parents: There are it's true, other Promiſes that have an indefinite reſpect unto them, nigher unto which they ſtand than the reſt of Mankind, as has been before obſerved: but for Promiſes made definitely to them, and which

do appertain unto them, merely as the Seed of believing Parents; ſo I conceive there are only theſe two.

1. That God will be a God to them. Thus when the Lord firſt eſtabliſhed his Covenant with *Abraham* the Father of the Faithful, he not only promiſes to be a God to him, but to his Seed after him; *I will eſtabliſh my Covenant between me and thee, and thy Seed after thee in their Generations, for an everlaſting Covenant, to be a God to thee and to thy Seed after thee*, Gen. 17. 7. So that this Promiſe of God's being a God to them is as expreſsly made to *Abraham's* Seed (and that he intends his natural Seed, immediately proceeding from his own loins, as well as his myſtical, has been ſufficiently proved elſewhere) as to *Abraham* himſelf; and is ſo continued to all Believers and their natural Seed, as has been alſo proved. So that that is the firſt Promiſe of the Covenant appertaining to the Infant-ſeed of Believers as ſuch.

2. The other is, that God will give them *the Land of* Canaan; that is, as that Promiſe is explained in the New Teſtament, *they ſhall be ſaved*. The Land of *Canaan* was a Type of Heaven, and the main and principal good intended in that Promiſe of *Canaan* was Heaven: And hence it was that *Abraham* from this Promiſe raiſes his hope and expectation of *a City that has foundations, whoſe Maker and Builder is God*, Hebr. 11. 10. And did not the Promiſe principally intend Heaven, or future Salvation, it had ſignified nothing either to *Abraham* himſelf, or any of his Seed, for upward of four hundred years; beſides 'tis ſaid to be given *for an everlaſting poſſeſſion*, which in reſpect of that Land literally taken was not true. And hence again, the Apoſtle *Paul* plainly intimates, or rather expreſsly declares, that all Believers are

Heirs

Heirs to, and have an equal intereſt in that Promiſe with *Abraham* himſelf, *Heb.* 6. 13. to the end of the Chapter, compared with *Gen.* 22. 16, 17. He tells us the reaſon of Gods confirming this Promiſe to *Abraham* (having reſpect to this very Promiſe) with an oath was, *that we* (that betake our ſelves to this hope that is ſet before us; that is, do renounce the World, and the things thereof, and betake our ſelves to Chriſt and his ways in hope of Heaven) *might have more ſtrong conſolation:* Now unleſs we were Joynt-heirs with *Abraham* of this Promiſe, the confirmation of it to him by an oath had made nothing to our conſolation: And this will yet be more evident if we conſider, that as God promiſed *to bleſs* Abraham, *ſo to multiply his Seed, and give them to poſſeſs the gates of their enemies*; that is, he would give them the Land of *Canaan*; and Believers are *Abraham*'s Seed, and as ſuch Heirs with him of that Promiſe: and hence in confirming that Promiſe unto him with an oath, he alike confirmed it unto us. From all which it is evident that the Promiſe of the Land of *Canaan* was, according to the true mind and meaning of God in it, a promiſe of Heaven: So that I ſay, that is the other Promiſe appertaining to the Seed of Believers as ſuch, *viz.* the promiſe of the Land of *Canaan*, or of Heaven, of future Salvation. Hence the Apoſtle tells the Jaylor, that upon his believing both himſelf and his *houſe ſhould be ſaved*, Acts 16. 31. But that is the firſt thing to be enquired into, *viz.* What Promiſes of the Covenant appertain to the Seed of Believers as ſuch? They are theſe two.

1. That God will be a God to them, and they ſhall poſſeſs the Land of *Canaan*; or, as *Abraham* underſtands it, a City that has foundations, whoſe Maker and

and Builder is God; that is, Heaven; which in other words, is, they ſhall be ſaved. The former of theſe Promiſes reſpects the time preſent; the latter the time to come: for the preſent God will be a God to them; for the future they ſhall be ſaved: that is, upon ſuppoſition of their performance of the conditions of the Covenant.

2. What is the Good intended in, and conſequently conveyed and made over to the Seed of Believers by theſe Promiſes?

1. For the latter of theſe Promiſes, *viz.* that of future Salvation. To begin with that firſt, becauſe there is no difficulty in it (as to what concerns our preſent purpoſe) requiring a large diſcuſſion of it: and therefore in brief, by Salvation we are to underſtand, all that Glory, Happineſs and Bleſſedneſs, whether conſiſting in liberation and freedom from evil, or any poſitive Good, that God has purpoſed, and Chriſt has purchaſed for his People, to be poſſeſſed and injoyed by them in Heaven, or in the life to come; which though we may rationally ſuppoſe will gradually differ as injoyed by Infants from that to be poſſeſſed and injoyed by Adult Believers; eſpecially who have attained to higher degrees in Grace and Holineſs; or have done, and ſuffered much for Chriſt here in the World: yet as it will be the ſame for kind, ſo it will be exceeding great. Though the Glory, Happineſs and Bleſſedneſs of the Saved, as well as the Miſery of the Damned will differ gradually, yet the loweſt degree of Glory, Happineſs and Bleſſedneſs to be injoyed in Heaven, as alſo of Miſery to be ſuffered in Hell will be unconceiveably great. The Holy Ghoſt tells us, *eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared*

for

for them that love him; that is, for all them that love him. In what latitude we are to underſtand theſe things, ſaid to be prepared for them that love God, we need not enquire: be ſure 'tis true of the things prepared and reſerved for Saints in Heaven, they are things that eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have they entred into the heart of man, not into the heart of a merely natural man, ſo as to conceive what, much leſs how great they are: but not into the heart of ſpiritual or regenerate men ſo as fully to apprehend what or how great and excellent they are. And as this is true of things that God has prepared for them that love him: So it is alike true of the things prepared for them that are beloved of him, though through the immaturity of their age they are incapable of an actual love to him. The Glory, Happineſs and Bleſſedneſs of the loweſt Saint in Heaven, whether dying in Infancy, or living to years of Maturity, will quite ſurpaſs the preſent thoughts and apprehenſions of the moſt enlightned underſtanding. And I ſay, all that Glory, Happineſs and Bleſſedneſs, is included and intended in this term Salvation, *they ſhall be ſaved*, that is, perfectly freed and delivered from all miſery that man through ſin is become ſubject to; and inſtated in the contrary ſtate of Glory, Happineſs and Bleſſedneſs. But

2. For the other Promiſe, *viz.* That of God's being a God to them; there is more difficulty in determining what is that Good contained in, and granted to the Infant-ſeed of Believers by it: In the general this ſeems plain, that it muſt be interpreted and underſtood as appertaining to Infants, as it is to be interpreted and underſtood as appertaining to the Adult, ſeing we have no warrant from the Scripture, neither does

does the different capacity of Infants and the Adult neceſſitate us to interpret and underſtand it otherwiſe as appertaining to the one, than we do as appertaining to the other: and therefore we muſt a little enquire into, and endeavour to ſtate the true ſenſe and meaning of this grand Promiſe of the Covenant, wherein God promiſes to be a God to his People, whether as appertaining to Infants or Adult Believers; and thus taking the Covenant in a ſtrict and proper ſenſe, for a mutual engagement between God and Man, ſo I conceive only theſe two things are intended, and included in it.

1. A mutual Relation between God and his People is conſtituted and eſtabliſhed thereby: and as by the conſtitution of this Relation between God and his People, they are brought nigh to him, and he is nigh to them. Hence they are ſaid to be near to God, *He alſo exalteth the Horn of his People, the praiſe of all his Saints, even of the Children of* Iſrael, *a People near unto him*, Pſal. 148. 14. And if they are near to him, he muſt needs be nigh to them: ſo they have a mutual propriety and intereſt each in other. Hence are thoſe appropriating terms in Scripture, and that on both parts. Hence on God's part, ſays he, *yea I ſware unto thee, and entred into a Covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine*, Ezek. 16. 8. Though God has a propriety in all Creatures, they are all his; yet we ſee he lays a peculiar claim to his People, as having a more eſpecial intereſt and propriety in them above what he has in others, and that by vertue of the Covenant entred with them: So on the People of Gods part, *My Beloved is mine*, ſaith the Spouſe, *Cant. 2. 16. Oh my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, thou art my Lord*, Pſal. 16. 2. And the like appro-

priating

priating terms we have frequently in Scripture. Man by his ſin has loſt his propriety and intereſt in God; hence whoſoever now has an intereſt and propriety in him, it muſt be by vertue of his own free Gift and Promiſe: they only can groundedly lay claim to intereſt and propriety in him to whom he promiſes to be a God. Hence his People hold their intereſt in him, not by vertue of their relation to him as his Creatures, but by the Covenant entred with them, wherein he has promiſed to be a God to them, and take them to be his People. And that is the firſt good contained in, and conveyed to the Infant-ſeed of Believers by this Promiſe, there is a mutual relation conſtituted thereby between God and them: by means whereof they have a mutual intereſt and propriety each in other, as they are God's, and therefore ſaid to be *born to him, and to be his Children*, Ezek. 16. 20, 21. ſo he is theirs: and how great a Good is that for God to give himſelf to the Seed of his People, as well as to them themſelves? That the great God *quantus, quantus eſt*, is and may be ſaid to be in a proper ſenſe, their God, their Portion and Inheritance?

2. The Good of, or contained in this Promiſe, is this; that God thereby has put himſelf under an obligation to his People to communicate himſelf to them, and act for their good, benefit and advantage, according to his own infinite Perfections, the true tenour of the Covenant made with them, and their capacity to receive: or thus, he has by this Promiſe put himſelf under an obligation to his People, to improve and imploy all hi sAttributes for their good, benefit and advantage, in a way agreeable to the whole Covenant, and their capability of receiving any good, benefit and advantage by that improvement, and imploy-

ment

ment of his ſeveral Attributes for them. So that the communications that God by this Promiſe has obliged himſelf to make of himſelf to his People, and theſe actings for their good, benefit and advantage, that he by the ſame Promiſe has obliged himſelf to, are limited three ways.

1. By his own infinite Perfections: and thus it is impoſſible for him to communicate his Deity to them, as the Deity of the Father is communicated to the Son; and the Deity of the Father and the Son to the Spirit; the infinity of the Deity renders it incommunicable to any being *extra ſe*, without it ſelf: but for his actings for the Good, Benefit and Advantage of his People they receive no limitations from his Perfections as abſolutely conſidered in themſelves; becauſe they are all infinite in themſelves, and ſhould he act *ad ultimum virium*, no other bounds or limits are aſſignable to them by the Creature than their *non Deification*. And therefore,

2. The communications of God to, and his actings for the Good, Benefit and Advantage of his People, are limited by the Covenanant he has made with them; and that both in regard of the Good he will communicate to, or do for them, and alſo in regard of the terms and conditions upon which he will communicate that Good to, and do it for them. Hence no more good can be expected from God, than what is contained in ſome Promiſe of the Covenant as made either indefinitely with the houſe of *Iſrael* in general, or definitely with particular and individual perſons; though 'tis true, the full Good contained in ſome Promiſes, eſpecially thoſe relating to the life to come, cannot be comprehended by any, while in this life: and therefore it is ſaid, Chriſt *ſhall come to be admired*

in

in them that believe, 2 Theſſ. 1. 10. the Good they then receive from him, exceeding their preſent expectations: but yet whatever Good they do, or then ſhall receive, is contained in ſome Promiſe. The Covenant is *norma judicii*, both in reſpect of rewarding the Righteous and puniſhing the Wicked. And

2. As the communications God makes of himſelf to, and his acting for the Good, Benefit and Advantage of his People, are limited by the Covenant, in regard of the Good communicated to, and done for them: So in regard of the terms and conditions upon which he does, and will communicate himſelf to them, and act for their Good, Benefit and Advantage, that the Covenant of Grace as definitely made with particular Perſons is conditional, or does require ſomewhat of duty on mans part in order to the injoyment of the Good promiſed, is to me paſt all rational doubt, and generally granted on all hands. I ſhall not therefore add any thing to prove it, but though God in ſome caſes may, and ſometimes does give the Good of ſome Promiſe, where man either wholly or in a great meaſure fails in performing the conditions prefixed to them; yet he is not obliged either by this grand Promiſe nor any other ſo to do: and in reſpect of the great fundamental Bleſſings of the Covenant, as pardon of Sin, future Glory, *&c.* He never gives them but upon ſuppoſition of the real and true performance of the conditions required in the Covenant on mans part. Hence I conceive it will neceſſarily follow, that as no particular perſons whether Infants or Adult, have an actual intereſt in this Promiſe; but ſuch as either for or by whom the fundamental conditions required to a Covenant-ſtate are performed: ſo this Promiſe not ſpecifying any particular Good, it does

not

not ſimply and abſolutely of it ſelf confer or give an immediate right to any Good contained in any of the Promiſes of the Covenant to thoſe that have an intereſt in it; it only conſtitutes a Covenant-relation between God and Man, and thereby gives them a mutual intereſt and propriety in each other, and then obliges God to communicate himſelf to, and act for the Good, Benefit and Advantage of thoſe that are under it, or intereſted in it, according to the tenour of the whole Covenant, or the various Promiſes contained therein: ſo that though this Promiſe does virtually include and comprehend the whole Good of the Covenant whether conſiſting in Spiritual or Temporal Bleſſings, yet does not merely or abſolutely of it ſelf confer, or enſure the Good of any one Promiſe appertaining to the Covenant upon or to any individual or particular Perſons whatſoever; it ſecures the injoyment of all the Good contained in the ſeveral and various Promiſes of the Covenant to thoſe, for or by whom the conditions or duties required therein are performed; but does not abſolutely confer or enſure the injoyment of the Good contained in any one Promiſe. And hence, with ſubmiſſion to better judgments, I conceive, that the Covenant-ſtate of the Infant-ſeed of Believers does not indiſpenſibly require any operations of the Spirit upon their hearts either for the diſpoſing them to act, or facilitating their acting of Grace, as they become capable to do it; or for the renovation of their natures, and effecting Grace in them. No ſuch operations are neceſſary in order to their having or performing the conditions of a Covenant-ſtate; ſeing the condition of their Covenant-ſtate is without them, and is their Parents Faith; no ſuch operations are included in, or aſſured by this Promiſe

of

of God's being a God to them; nor as I conceive, in that other concerning their future Salvation: for though 'tis true, Regeneration is abſolutely neceſſary to admiſſion into, and the actual poſſeſſion of Heaven; yet that may be wrought *in tranſitu*, (as the relicks of indwelling ſin are purged away in Believers) or at any time anteceding when God ſees meet: But of this more by and by.

And that this Promiſe of God's being a God to his People, whether Infants or Adult Believers, does not of it ſelf either immediately confer, or for the future abſolutely enſure the Good contained in any of the various Promiſes of the Covenant made to them, and conſequently only lays ſuch an obligation upon God as is afore expreſt, I ſhall firſt prove by one more general Argument, and then clear it up in ſome particular inſtances.

Arg. Whatever Good is either conferred or granted for the preſent, or enſured for the future, by any Promiſe as taken abſolutely and by it ſelf, muſt be expreſsly held forth, or neceſſarily implyed in the Terms in which it is made, or elſe muſt in ſome other place of Scripture be declared to be intended in it: But in this Promiſe no particular Good, *&c.*

For the *major* Propoſition, the enumeration being full and ſufficient, that cannot be gainſaid.

For the *minor*, the truth of that will appear in the particular Branches of it.

Firſt, That no particular Good contained in any of the Promiſes of the Covenant is expreſsly held forth in the Terms of this Promiſe it ſelf, is obvious unto all: God's promiſing to be a God to any neither ſpecifies, nor particularly expreſſes any particular Good he will vouchſafe to, or beſtow upon them:

it is only a more general assurance of some Good, but what that Good is, or upon what terms it shall be injoyed is not expreſt.

2. That no particular Good is neceſſarily implyed or included in the Terms of the Promiſe is evident thus. It muſt be implyed and included either merely *ſub notione boni*, or *ſub notione boni promiſſi*, either as a Good in the general, or as a promiſed Good: but no particular Good can be implyed or included under either of theſe notions; for then all Good in general, at leaſt all promiſed Good, muſt be implyed and included *à quatenùs ad omne valet conſequentia*, and then all Good, at leaſt all promiſed Good, would be either actually conferred, or a right thereunto would be given, or the future injoyment thereof would be infallibly ſecured upon or to all thoſe that have an Intereſt in this Promiſe; the contrary whereunto is not only evident to every ones obſervation, but undeniably evident from Scripture, as ſhall be ſhewed more fully by and by.

3. That any particular Good contained in any of the Promiſes of the Covenant is declared in any Scripture to be implyed or included in this Promiſe cannot be affirmed; becauſe no ſuch Declaration is to be found. Whatever Scriptures may be produced for that purpoſe, I doubt not, but it will be eaſily made to appear they prove not the thing they are produced for the proof of. Hence I conclude, that this Promiſe, as taken abſolutely and by it ſelf, does neither actually conſer, nor give a right to, nor abſolutely ſecure any particular Good contained in any of the Promiſes of the Covenant upon or to thoſe that have an Intereſt in it: but is

only

only an obligation upon God to communicate himself to them, and act or improve and imploy his several Attributes for their Good, Benefit and Advantage, according to the true tenour of the Covenant and the various Promises contained in it.

CHAP. VII.

That the forementioned Good, and that only, is contained in that grand Promise of the Covenant, further confirmed in some particular Instances. The first Instance proposed. No special or saving influences or operations of the Spirit are included in this Promise, so as by it, as taken absolutely and by it self, to be conferred upon, or absolutely ensured to any interested in it. The several uses and ends of these influences and operations, declared. What is affirmed, proved. First, more generally. Secondly, more particularly. One Objection answered. A second Instance proposed: where it is proved, That no Love that is peculiar and proper to the Elect, is expresst or ensured in or by this grand Promise of the Covenant, as taken absolutely and by it self, to all interested in it. This largly insisted upon. What may be pleaded against it, answered.

swered. A brief Recapitulation of that Good redounding to the Seed of Believers, as received into Covenant with their Parents, and having these two Promises appertaining to them. That Good summed up under four Heads. That the Seed of Believers have all Good, proved by four Arguments. The second Question for the unfolding this second Good or Benefit arising to the Seed of Believers from the Application of the Token of the Covenant, proposed: where it is shewed wherein the Benefit and Advantage of having the Covenant with the Promise of it ratified, sealed and confirmed by an outward Sign or Token, does consist. What hazard is run by the neglect of the Application of the Token of the Covenant, shewed.

FOr the further clearing up and confirming of what is affirmed, I shall instance in some particular Good things promised in the Covenant of Grace, which of all things promised may seem most probably included in, and consequently granted and ensured by this Promise to those that have an interest in it, and shew that they are not so included in it, as by it, as absolutely taken, to be conferred upon, granted or ensured to any that are interested in it.

1. First, Let us instance in the special and saving operations and influences of the Spirit of God. These are a Good which of all Good things promised in the Covenant may seem to be most essential to this Promise, and

yet

yet we shall find it to be otherwise. And for clearing up of this we may observe, that these saving influences and operations of the Spirit are vouchsafed for a threefold end and purpose in the general.

1. First, For the effecting and producing the first Grace, as the first saving Illumination of the Mind, the Renovation of the Nature by Regeneration.

2. Secondly, For the maintaining the Seed and truth of Grace in the Soul, whereby its Union with Christ is continued.

3. Thirdly, For the managing and carrying on the further spiritual concerns of the Soul, consisting in higher degrees of Sanctification, Assurance, Peace, Joy, the due performance of holy Duties and the like. Now that these saving influences and operations of the Spirit for any of, or for all these several ends and purposes are not so included in this Promise of God's being a God to his People, as to be actually granted or ensured by it, as taken absolutely and by it self, to any of those that have an Interest in it, will appear two ways.

First, more generally, and we may argue thus: If any of these saving influences and operations of the Spirit are included in, and absolutely ensured by this Promise, as taken absolutly and by it self, then they are all alike included in, and absolutely ensured by it: But all these influences and operations of the Spirit are not included in, or absolutely ensured by it; and therefore not any. The *Minor* is undeniable: for if all these saving influences and operations of the Spirit are included in, and absolutely ensured by this Promise, as taken absolutely and by it self, then all that have an interest in the Promise would injoy all those influences and operations of the Spirit, and that in the highest degree, or

elſe God muſt be ſuppoſed to fail in the performance of the Promiſe: but now it is paſt all rational contradiction, that all that have an Intereſt in this Promiſe, do not injoy all theſe influences and operations of the Spirit, poſſibly ſome, if not all, yet in a very low degree, and then much leſs in the higheſt degree; neither can it without blaſphemy be ſuppoſed that God does at any time fail in the performance of his Promiſes: therefore undoubtedly they are not all, eſpecially in the higheſt degree, in which they may be injoyed by men in this life, included in, nor abſolutely enſured by this Promiſe.

The Conſequence in the *Major* Propoſition is evident; becauſe the Promiſe, as taken abſolutely and by it ſelf, neither ſpecifieth nor particularizeth any of theſe influences or operations of the Spirit, neither is there any thing in the Promiſe it ſelf, nor in any explication or interpretation that God himſelf in any other place of Scripture makes of it, is a ground for us to diſtinguiſh and ſay, ſuch influences and operations of the Spirit are included in, and abſolutely enſured by it, and not others; and where neither the Promiſe it ſelf diſtinguiſheth, nor are we in any other place of Scripture warranted to diſtinguiſh of the good contained in, and enſured by the Promiſe, there we are not at all to diſtinguiſh; and hence, as in caſe any of theſe influences and operations of the Spirit are included in, and abſolutely enſured by this Promiſe, we have no reaſon from the Promiſe it ſelf, why we ſhould not conclude that they are all included in, and enſured by it: ſo ſeeing it is certain they are not all included in, and enſured by it, we have no reaſon to conclude nor ſuppoſe that any are. But

Secondly, more particularly: And thus we ſhall find

find this true in respect of these influences and operations of the Spirit, as vouchsafed for these several ends and purposes before mentioned, distinctly considered.

First, For those influences and operations of the Spirit vouchsafed for the effecting and producing the first Grace; that these influences and operations of the Spirit cannot be included in, or ensured by this Promise, is evident; Because in respect of the Adult they are indispensibly presupposed to an Interest in it, and the Promise cannot secure to any a Good that is indispensibly required antecedent to an Interest in it; for then it would secure the Good contained in it to these to whom at present it does not appertain, which is impossible; for then a Man must be supposed to have an Interest in the Promise before he has that which is indispensibly necessary to his having an Interest in it, which is an absolute contradiction. Now if this Promise does not secure these influences and operations of the Spirit to such, it cannot be rationally supposed to secure them to any others, and consequently they cannot be included in, or ensured to any by it, as taken absolutely and by it self.

Secondly, For those influences of the Spirit vouchsafed, for the maintaining the seed and truth of Grace in the Soul wherein it is already wrought, whereby its Union with Christ is maintained: that those influences and operations of the Spirit are not included in, nor ensured by this Promise, as taken absolutely and by it self, is alike evident with the former, and that upon the same ground, *viz.* the necessary precedency of the Soul's union with Christ, and consequently of these influences and operations of the Spirit necessary to the maintaining of that union, at least in order

of nature to its holding its interest in the Promise; *If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father*, 1 John 2. 24. The remaining or abiding of the Word, *viz.* in that effect or fruit of it, habitual Grace in the Soul, is the condition of, and consequently must necessarily be considered as antecedent to (at least in order of nature) its union with and interest in both the Son and the Father. Hence should these influences and operations of the Spirit be included in, and ensured by this Promise, as taken absolutely and by it self, it would cease to be conditional and become an absolute Promise, and consequently discharge the People of God from all duty subordinate to their maintaining their Union with Christ and interest in this Promise: to talk of an absolute Promise which requires duty on Man's part in order to his injoying the Good contained in it, is an absolute contradiction.

3. Thirdly, For the third Head of the Spirit's influences and operations, *viz.* such as are vouchsafed for the carrying on and managing the further and higher concerns of the Soul, in the various degrees of Sanctification, Assurance, Peace, Joy, spiritual performance of holy duties and the like, that these are not included in this grand Promise of the Covenant so as to be conferred, or absolutely ensured thereby, as taken absolutely and by it self, to all that have an interest in it, is evident from the undenyable experiences of many, if not most Believers. 'Tis possible that true Believers may for a time be so far deserted, as to injoy only such influences and operations of the Spirit as are simply and absolutely necessary to the maintaining

taining the life of Grace in them, and that in the very habit and ſeed thereof, which could not be, in caſe theſe influences and operations of the Spirit vouchſafed for theſe higher ends and purpoſes were included in, and abſolutely ſecured by this Promiſe, as taken abſolutely and by it ſelf: ſo that the truth affirmed is ſufficiently evident in this firſt inſtance. None of the ſaving influences or operations of the Spirit are included in this Promiſe of God's being a God to his People, ſo as by it as taken abſolutely and by it ſelf, to be conferred upon, or abſolutely enſured to any intereſted in it.

Obj. But poſſibly ſome may object, that this Promiſe ſeems to be called the *Promiſe of the Spirit*, Gal. 3. 14. And therefore, ſure it muſt neceſſarily include at leaſt ſome of the ſaving influences and operations of the Spirit, and conſequently ſecure them to all that have an intereſt in it.

Anſw. That any of the ſaving operations of the Spirit are included in this Promiſe cannot be concluded from that Scripture, will appear by a brief view of the ſeveral interpretations that it will admit of, and are put upon it by our beſt Interpreters. Thus ſome conceive that a diſtinct Good is intended in this Promiſe of the Spirit, from that bleſſing of *Abraham*, ſaid to come upon the Gentiles through Chriſt. By the bleſſing of *Abraham* we are to underſtand the Good contained in this grand Promiſe of the Covenant, *viz. That God would be a God to him and his Seed*; but then by the Promiſe of the Spirit, they conceive a further conſequential Good is intended, *viz.* the indwelling preſence of the Spirit, with thoſe ſaving influences and operations that are conſequential thereunto.

* ἡ δὲ πίστις τὴν δικαιοσύνην εἰσήγαγεν, ἡ δὲ δικαιοσύνη τὴν χάριν τοῦ πνεύματος ἐπισπάσατο. *Chrysostom.*

unto*. And for the right understanding of this, we must observe, that the Apostle here speaks to Adult Believers, and tells them that the blessing of *Abraham* was come upon them, through Christ they were made Heirs of this Promise, as the Seed of *Abraham* they were now under this Promise of God's being a God to them and their natural Seed, as he was to *Abraham*, and as consequential to their interest in this Promise they were under another Promise, *viz.* that of the Spirit: So that the Apostle speaks here of the Promise of the Spirit as appertaining to Adult Believers consequential to *Abraham*'s blessing being come upon them. Of this Opinion were *Chrysostom* of old, and *Beza* of late; but others suppose that one and the same Good is intended in both parts of the Verse, and answerably that by the Promise of the Spirit is meant the blessing of *Abraham* said to be come upon the Gentiles. And taking the words thus, a twofold sense may be given of them.

First, This blessing of *Abraham* may be called the Promise of the Spirit, only to denote the nature or kind of that blessing promised, 'tis a spiritual Blessing, or a Promise of a spiritual Good, so *Pareus*; or else that Blessing may be called the Promise of the Spirit, only to denote the Author of it, it was given by the Spirit, and by his Inspiration left upon Record in the Scriptures: so that take the sense which way we will, there is no necessity that we should take that Promise including a Promise of the Spirit. But let that suffice for the first instance.

Secondly, Let us take another instance in the Love

and

and Favour of God, that is a peculiar Good promised in the Covenant of Grace, *I will love them freely*, Hos. 14. 4. Now here again we shall find that this Promise taken absolutely and by it self, does not necessarily imply or include, and consequently does not absolutely ensure to all that have an interest in it, such Love or Favour from God as is peculiar and proper to the Elect: The Apostle *John* indeed tells us, *that God is Love*, and as he is essentially Love, so he expresses his Love, as in various ways, so in various degrees and measures towards his Creatures, according to the good pleasure of his Will: Now it is readily granted, that God does express more Love, or does vouchsafe higher and greater effects and fruits of his Love to those to whom he has extended his Covenant, or between himself and whom he hath constituted a Covenant-relation, than he has done to the rest of Mankind, between himself and whom there is no such Covenant-relation. Thus the very extending his Covenant to the Infant-seed of Believers, and giving them a present propriety in, and taking them to be a peculiar People to himself, are glorious expressions or fruits of his Love to them; besides various other expressions and fruits of his Love vouchsafed to them as in a Covenant-state, and Members of the Church and Family of Christ as visible here upon earth, and while the Covenant-relation, with the priviledges attending it are continued to them, the Love expresst in it and them is continued to them: But yet, as these expressions and fruits of his Love and Favour are not peculiar and proper to the Elect, but may be common to others with them, and may be, and answerably are withdrawn from them, upon a failure in the performance of the conditions of the Covenant by them; so no more

more or no further Love is enſured by this Promiſe, than what is actually expreſſed in giving it to them, and conſtituting thereby a Covenat-relation between him and them, and vouchſafing them the Token of his Covenant, and thereby admiſſion into his Church, Kingdom and Family as viſible here upon earth. So that I have here two things to prove.

1. Firſt, That God may extend his Covenant to the Non-elect, ſo as to conſtitute thereby a true Covenant-relation between himſelf and them, and may thereupon vouchſafe them the Token of his Covenant, and thereby admiſſion into the viſible Church, and conſequently that what Love and Favour is expreſt in theſe things is not peculiar to the Elect.

2. Secondly, That this grand Promiſe of the Covenant, as taken abſolutely and by it ſelf, does not neceſſarily include, and conſequently does not enſure any further Love or Favour peculiar and proper to the Elect to any of thoſe to whom it is made, and to whom it does appertain.

For the firſt, that is proved thus: If for God ſo to extend his Covenant to, or enter it with ſome Non-elect, as to conſtitute a true and proper Covenant-relation between himſelf and them, and to vouchſafe them thereupon the Token of it, and thereby admit them as Members of the Church viſible, be ſimply and abſolutely poſſible in it ſelf, and be no way inconſiſtent with what himſelf has revealed and declared in his Word, either concerning the ſubjects or nature and tenour of the Covenant, or concerning the Good vouchſafed, or to be vouchſafed to thoſe who are taken in as ſubjects of it, then he may extend it in the ſenſe before expreſt to ſome Non-elect, and anſwerably vouchſafe them the Token of it: But the former is true; therefore

the

the latter. The *Minor* Propoſition alone needs proof: and here we have in the general two things to prove.

First, That for God to extend his Covenant to the Non-elect and vouchſafe them the Token of it, is ſimply and abſolutely poſſible in it ſelf: Now for this, that this is ſimply and abſolutely poſſible is unqueſtionable. The Soveraignty of God and his abſolute freedom to deal with his Creatures as himſelf pleaſes, ſecures this paſt all rational doubt; if he may (as who queſtions but that he may) enter Covenant conditionally with all Men, why may he not go ſomewhat further with ſome, and actually take them into a Covenant-relation with himſelf, and vouchſafe them the Token of his Covenant whom yet he has not ordained to Salvation?

Secondly, That for God thus to do is no way inconſiſtent with what he has revealed and declared in his Word, either concerning the ſubjects or the nature and tenour of the Covenant, or concerning the Good vouchſafed, or to be vouchſafed to thoſe that are taken in as the ſubjects of it. The truth of this will appear in the particular branches: And thus,

First, For God to extend his Covenant to ſome Non-elect, and anſwerably vouchſafe them the Token of it, is no way inconſiſtent with what he has declared in his Word concerning the ſubjects of it: This is ſufficiently evident, becauſe whatever God has declared in his Word concerning the ſubjects of his Covenant, yet he has no where declared that he would not take in any as the ſubjects of it that were not elected; he has no where limited his Covenant to the Elect. If there be any ſuch declaration in the Scriptures let it be ſhewed.

Secondly, That for God ſo to extend his Covenant

to

to ſome Non-elect, is no way inconſiſtent with what he has declared in his Word concerning the nature and tenour of the Covenant it ſelf. That which alone can be pleaded, as oppoſing God's extending his Covenant in the ſenſe expreſt to the Non-elect, is, what he has declared concerning the everlaſtingneſs and unchangeableneſs of it, with the proviſion made, and ſecurity given, that it ſhall never be broken by thoſe that are taken in as ſubjects of it; And there is indeed a ſeeming inconſiſtency between what is now affirmed concerning Gods extending his Covenant to the Non-elect, and thoſe things ſo frequently aſſerted and inculcated in the Scriptures; and thus much ſhall be readily granted, that thoſe things ſo frequently declared and repeated in the Scriptures concerning the Covenant, do infallibly prove that the Covenant as entred with ſome, ſhall ſtand firm and remain inviolate, ſhall never be broken; yet I conceive all that is delcared in Scripture of this nature concerning the Covenant, will not prove but that God may, and that in a conſiſtency with his Word, extend it in the ſenſe expreſt to ſome that are not elected. For

First, As for what the Scriptures declare concerning the everlaſtingneſs of the Covenant: And thus it's true, the Covenant of Grace is frequently affirmed to be an everlaſting Covenant, *Gen.* 17. 7. *Iſa.* 55. 3. *Jer.* 32. 40. But to that I would ſay three things.

First, That the Covenant may be called an everlaſting Covenant on either of theſe two accounts.

First, On the account of the Good promiſed in it: The Good promiſed in the Covenant is not a mere temporal, or temporary Good, but an eternal or everlaſting Good, even everlaſting bleſſedneſs and happineſs: Thus the Land of *Canaan* is ſaid to be an everlaſting

everlasting Possession, because the Good typified by, and principally intended in the Promise of that Land, is everlasting Happiness and Blessedness: Or

Secondly, The Covenant may be said to be an everlasting Covenant, on the account of the duration of it throughout all ages, and that as to the essence or substance of it invariable, whether we respect the Promises on God's part, or the duties to be performed on Man's part: though there has been, and may be some variations in the administrations of the Covenant, yet it is as to the substance of it one and the same, and so shall continue while *Abraham* has a Seed upon the earth; and on either of these accounts it may be called an everlasting Covenant.

Obj. But it may be some will say, if we grant that the Covenant is not called an everlasting Covenant from the constancy and immutability of it as made with particular Persons, the foundation of the Doctrine of Perseverance will be greatly shaken thereby.

Answ. To that I shall only say two or three things.

First, That its true we must have an equal respect unto all the Doctrines of the Gospel, especially that are of equal weight and importance: and answerably take heed that we do not establish one Doctrine upon the ruines of another; that we do not by endeavouring to establish one Doctrine shake the foundations of another; and hence as we must be careful, that, while we endeavour to establish the Doctrine of Infant-Baptism, we do not shake the Doctrine of Perseverance, and so *vice versa*; both Doctrines may be sufficiently established upon Scripture grounds without prejudice each to other: And therefore

Secondly, Though we grant the Scriptures affirming the Covenant to be an everlasting Covenant, will not

not infallibly prove its conſtancy and immutability, as made with particular perſons, yet the Doctrine of Saints perſeverance may be eſtabliſhed againſt all rational oppoſition upon other Scripture grounds: Of which more hereafter; and therefore

Thirdly, We may grant, yea affirm, that the Covenant is ſaid to be everlaſting from its conſtancy and immutability, as made with particular perſons, and yet hold and maintain that God may extend it in the ſenſe expreſt to ſome that are not elected, and anſwerably an Argument may be drawn from this property of the Covenant, *viz.* its Eternity, for the eſtabliſhing the Doctrine of Perſeverance, without any prejudice to the Doctrine of Infant Baptiſm; only then we muſt diſtinguiſh between the Covenant as compleatly made with the Adult, and as leſs compleatly entred with Infants as the Seed of believing Parents. And that when the Covenant is called an everlaſting Covenant, it's to be underſtood of the Covenant as compleatly made with the Adult, is evident from the way it comes to be ſo; and that is by God's putting his Laws in the minds, and writing them in the hearts of thoſe with whom it is made. Now theſe Promiſes of putting the Law in the mind, and writing it in the heart, as they are only made indefinitely to the Church in general, and conſequently ſecure not the Good contained in them to each individual perſon to whom in common with others they do appertain; ſo they are at leaſt ordinarily only made good to the Adult, and to whomſoever they are made good the Covenant abides firm, and as eſtabliſhed between God and them, may be truly called an everlaſting Covenant: But this brings me

See my *Infant-Baptiſm from Heaven.* Book 1. Page 50.

to

to the third Branch of this second thing proposed for proof of the *minor* Proposition of our foregoing Argument; so that what is declared in the Scriptures concerning the everlastingness of the Covenant, may very well consist with what is affirmed concerning God's extending it to the Non-elect. It may be said to be an everlasting Covenant on several accounts; but grant it to be so called on the account of its constancy and immutability, as made with particular persons, yet it must then be taken as made only with the Adult. God has made his Covenant conditionally with all mankind, whereby though all men as absolutely considered are put in a capacity or possibility of being saved, yet Salvation is absolutely secured to none; he has so extended his Covenant to the Seed of Believers as thereby to constitute a true and proper Covenant-relation between himself and them, when yet, the Covenant being not fully compleat, their state is mutable: when the condition devolves upon themselves, they may fail in the performance of it, and thereupon be cast out; but when once the Covenant becomes compleat, is mutually plighted between God and an Adult person, through the saving operations of the Spirit upon the heart, now it is an unchangeable and everlasting Covenant, the soul's performance of the conditions being secured by the abiding presence of the Spirit in it. But

Thirdly, That for God so to extend his Covenant to some that are not elected, as to constitute a true and proper Covenant-relation between himself and them, is no way inconsistent with what the Scriptures declare concerning any Good vouchsafed or to be vouchsafed to those that are taken in as Subjects of it. And here again a twofold Good can only, as I

judge be pleaded, as opposing what is affirmed.

First, Their discharge and immunity from the guilt and condemning power of Original sin, resulting from their Covenant-state.

Secondly, Saving Grace. The former is a Good actually vouchsafed; the latter may be supposed to be necessarily vouchsafed, by vertue of the Promise made to the Covenant-people of God.

But for the former, I shall only say, 'tis sufficient that God has no where declared in his Word, that all that are or may be discharged of, and have an immunity from the guilt and condemning power of any, however of Original sin, shall infallibly be preserved in a Covenant-state, and thereby brought to Salvation at last. I know in part what is said as to this, but let me say, to bottom the Doctrine of Perseverance upon such a supposition is altogether unsafe. Whether the guilt of Original sin do revive and be recharged upon such of the Seed of Believers as do, when they grow up to years of Maturity, neglect to take hold of the Covenant, and thereby forfeit their interest in it, is a question of more difficulty to resolve, than usefulness when resolved; and therefore I shall pass it by.

For the latter Good, which may be supposed to be necessarily vouchsafed to all that are taken in as Subjects of the Covenant, *viz.* saving Grace, I have said so much to it once and again, I need add no more at present; that may suffice that the Promises containing that Good, at least as it is meant of the first Grace, are not made to any in particular, they are made to the Church in general, and answerably secure the Good contained in them only to the Elect; and that hinders not but that God may extend his Covenant in the sense intended to some that are not elected:

cted: But let that ſuffice for the firſt thing to be proved.

Secondly, That this Promiſe, as taken abſolutely and by it ſelf, does not neceſſarily include or ſecure to all thoſe to whom it is made, or to whom it does appertain, any further Love and Favour from God that is peculiar and proper to the Elect: as it does not neceſſarily imply or infer Election, or that all theſe to whom it is made are elected, and conſequently beloved with the Love of Election, ſo it does not neceſſarily include or ſecure any conſequent Love or Favour that is peculiar and proper to the Elect. This will appear, if we conſider, what Love and Favour is peculiar and proper to the Elect; and that falls under a twofold conſideration. Firſt, As a love of Beneficence. Secondly, As a love of Complacence.

For the firſt, And thus the Love and Favour of God, as expreſt in a way of Beneficence to the Elect, differs from that common Love and Favour vouchſafed to men in general, only in degree, and thoſe fruits and effects wherein it is expreſt; 'tis acted more intenſely (to ſpeak of God after the manner of men, and according to our ſhallow apprehenſions of him) and in different effects and fruits, than it is acted and expreſſed towards men in general; theſe Effects and Fruits, which we are at preſent only concerned in, may in the general be reduced to theſe three Heads, Regeneration to a ſtate of life, Preſervation in that ſtate, and future Glorification. Now none of theſe Effects and Fruits of the Love and Favour of God are neceſſarily included in, or ſecured by this Promiſe as taken abſolutely and by it ſelf, this has been ſufficiently proved already: for if the firſt, *viz.* Regeneration be not included in, or ſecured by it, neither of

the two latter can, in as much as they neceſſarily preſuppoſe the antecedency of this. Now that this firſt Fruit and Effect of that ſpecial Love and Favour of God peculiar and proper to the Elect is not neceſſarily included in, or ſecured by this Promiſe, is ſufficiently evident from what has been already ſaid; therefore I ſhall add no more.

Secondly, For the latter, *viz.* The Love and Favour of God as expreſt in a way of complacency and delight: and under this Head we may comprehend all thoſe things wherein this Love and Favour of God is expreſt, or whereby it is ſignified to thoſe to whom it is vouchſafed, as the ſignal manifeſtations of himſelf in Chriſt in his ſmiles upon the Soul, the ſheddings abroad of his Love in the heart, and the like. Now that the Love and Favour of God, as expreſt this way, is not neceſſarily included in, or ſecured by this Promiſe, as taken abſolutely and by it ſelf, will neceſſarily follow from what has been already ſaid. This Love and Favour of God to Men always ſuppoſes them truly regenerate and ſanctified, and conſequently cannot be included in, or ſecured by that Promiſe in which Regeneration and Sanctification are not included, or by which they are not ſecured; or at leaſt which does not preſuppoſe them already wrought, and is acted and expreſſed according to the degree of Sanctification attained, to the lively exerciſe of Grace, due performance of Obedience and the like. Hence thoſe that are truly regenerated, may ſo ſink and degenerate in their Sanctification, exerciſe of Grace, and performance of Obedience, as that this Love ſhall be acted and expreſſed (if at all, yet) in a very low and remiſs degree; whereas were it included in, and ſecered by this Promiſe, as taken abſolutely

ſolutely and by it ſelf, it would be acted and expreſſed always alike towards all, to whom this Promiſe does appertain: So that to come to a cloſe of this, we may evidently ſee, that as Intereſt in this Promiſe does not univerſally flow from the electing Love of God, he may make this Promiſe to ſome that are not elected, and thereby conſtitute a true and proper Covenant-relation between himſelf & them, and anſwerably vouchſafe them the Token of his Covenant, and by the Application of that to them ſolemnly admit them into his Church viſible; ſo no further or conſequent Love or Favour that is peculiar and proper to the Elect, is neceſſarily included in, nor ſecured by that Promiſe, and conſequently (which is the thing aſſerted) this Promiſe as taken abſolutely and by it ſelf, does not neceſſarily imply, that all to whom it does appertain, are under, or do injoy any of that Love and Favour that is peculiar and proper to the Elect, neither is that Love and Favour neceſſarily included in, or ſecured by it, to thoſe to whom it does appertain. But that is a ſecond inſtance to prove what is aſſerted, *viz.* That no particular Good contained in any of the Promiſes of the Covenant is either implyed in, or ſecured by this grand Promiſe, as taken abſolutely and by it ſelf to any to whom it does appertain. I had intended to have proceeded ſomewhat further, but I am loth to be over tedious, and I conceive what has been ſaid may ſuffice. I ſuppoſe it will be granted, that in caſe neither any of the ſaving influences and operations of the Spirit, nor any of that ſpecial Love and Favour that is peculiar and proper to the Elect, which are two of the moſt eſſential Good things of the Covenant, be implyed in, or ſecured to any, to whom this Promiſe does appertain by it, as taken abſolutely and by it ſelf;

then no other Good contained in any other Promiſe of the Covenant is implyed or included in, or ſecured by it, as ſo taken: And therefore let that ſuffice for the ſecond way, how the communications of himſelf to, and his actings for the Good, Benefit and Advantage of his Covenant-people, whereunto God has obliged himſelf by this Promiſe, are limited; they are limited by the tenour of the Covenant, and of the various Promiſes contained therein, and conſequently, no particular Good contained in any of the Promiſes of the Covenant, being neceſſarily implyed or included in, or ſecured by this Promiſe, as taken abſolutely and by it ſelf; it will undeniably follow that this Promiſe is only a more general obligation upon God to perform and make good the whole Covenant, yet not abſolutely, but according to the true tenour of it, and of the various Promiſes contained in it: ſo that as none by vertue of this Promiſe can lay claim to any Good, but what is ſomewhere promiſed, ſo none can expect any Good promiſed, but according to the tenour of, and terms upon which the Promiſe containing ſuch a Good is made. But,

Thirdly, There is another way how the communications of himſelf to, and his actings for the Good Benefit and Advantage of thoſe this Promiſe appertains to, whereunto by this Promiſe God has obliged himſelf, are limited, and that is the capacity of the Subject to receive, *Unumquodque recipitur ſecundum modum recipientis.* But this being exentrical to my preſent deſign, I ſhall wholly paſs it by. From the whole of what has been hitherto ſaid, as to this ſecond Good or Benefit that the Infant-ſeed of Believers have by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them, we ſee what the Token of the Covenant, as ap-

p'yed

plyed to them by reference and relation to, and therein what Promiſes of the Covenant appertain to them, and alſo what is the Good contained in, and conſequently granted to, or ſetled upon them by thoſe Promiſes, and that was the firſt thing enquired into. Now as a cloſe of this, and before I proceed to the ſecond enquiry, I conceive it is neceſſary that I ſhould reflect a little back, and ſum up and give a diſtinct and particular account of what Good the Infant-ſeed of Believers have, as received with their Parents into the Covenant of Grace, and as having in particular thoſe Promiſes aforementioned made unto them; and alſo add ſomething further to prove that they indeed have all that Good, as ſo received into Covenant, and as having thoſe Promiſes made to them: As for the Good they have, that is fourfold.

Firſt, They are put into a New-Covenant-ſtate, they are abſolutely for the preſent removed from under the Covenant of Works, or the Covenant entred with Man in the ſtate of Innocency, and taken into, as the actual Subjects of, the ſecond Covenant, or Covenant of Grace; that is their preſent ſtate, they are actually under the Covenant of Grace, and as the neceſſary effect and conſequence thereof are freed and diſcharged from the guilt and condemning power of Original ſin.

Secondly, They have at preſent true real and proper intereſt and propriety in God: as they are his, ſo he is theirs, there is a mutual propriety and intereſt in each other.

Thirdly, They have God under an actual obligation, *viz.* of his Promiſe to improve and imploy all his Attributes for their Good Benefit and Advantage according, or in a way agreeable to the true te-

nour of the Covenant and of the various Promiſes of it.

Fouthly, They have a preſent Intereſt in, and Right to Salvation, and anſwerably, in caſe of their death before a forfeiture be made of that their Intereſt and Right, they ſhall be infallibly ſaved. This Promiſe of Salvation being made to them as the Seed of believing Parents, requires nothing on their part to the injoyment of the Good contained in it; and God having ingaged by Promiſe to be a God unto them, he has thereby obliged himſelf to make good this Promiſe to them: Now though upon ſuppoſition that the Covenant and Promiſes thereof appertaining to the Seed of Believers be entred with, and made to them definitely, that is, with and to each one in particular, (which that they are, has been before proved, and is now taken for granted) I cannot apprehend how it can with any ſhew of reaſon be denied, but muſt neceſſarily be granted, that they have all that Good now declared and aſſigned to them; and conſequently any further proof may ſeem to be ſuperfluous; yet *ex abundanti*, I ſhall add theſe three or four Arguments.

Arg. 1. Firſt what Good is, either according to the literal and moſt proper ſenſe, and ſignification of the words, contained in theſe Promiſes of the Covenant, or does neceſſarily and inſeparably ariſe and flow from the very eſtabliſhment of the Covenant with the Infant-ſeed of Believers, that Good they have, as received thereunto with their Parents, and as having thoſe Promiſes made unto them: but all that Good aforementioned, either according to the literal or moſt proper ſenſe and ſignification of the words, is contained in the Promiſes of the Covenant, or elſe does neceſſarily and inſeparably ariſe and flow from the very

eſtabliſhment

eſtabliſhment of the Covenant with the Seed of believing Parents; therefore they have all that Good as received into the Covenant with their Parents, and as having theſe Promiſes made unto them. Both theſe Propoſitions carry their own evidence with ſo much clearneſs, that I need add nothing for the confirmation of either of them. Certainly when God promiſes to be a God to the Seed of his People, according to the literal and moſt proper ſenſe and ſignification of theſe words, he means himſelf, and to interpret that Promiſe of any lower Good would be to offer apparent violence to it; and the like may be ſaid of the Promiſe of Salvation, and that a New-Covenant-ſtate, Propriety and Intereſt in God, with an obligation upon him to improve all his Attributes for the Good, Benefit and Advantage of thoſe to whom the Promiſe is made, and a Right to Salvation, do neceſſarily ariſe and flow from the very eſtabliſhment of the Covenant, and making theſe Promiſes with, or to any, whether Infants or Adult, will as I ſuppoſe be queſtioned by none: And therefore

Arg. 2. Secondly, If believing Parents have all that Good as received into Covenant, and as having thoſe Promiſes made unto them; then ſo have their Infant-ſeed, they being alike received into Covenant, and having the ſame Promiſes made alike to them: but the former is true; therefore the latter.

The antecedent is ſecured from any oppoſition not only by evidence of Scripture light, but by the univerſal acknowledgment of all Chriſtians; neither do I ſee any ground from Scripture, or right Reaſon to doubt of the conſequence: This is undoubted to me, that Pædo-Baptiſts aſſigning one kind of Good to Parents and another to Infants, while yet they plead

for

for Infants having the ſame Intereſt in the Covenant and theſe grand Promiſes of it that Parents have, has not a little promoted the errour of Anti-Pædo-Baptiſm. But

Arg. 3. Thirdly, Unleſs the Infant-ſeed of believing Parents have that Good afore declared, they have no intereſt at all in the Covenant: but the Infant-ſeed of believing Parents have a true and real intereſt in the Covenant; *Ergo.*

The conſequence in the *Major* Propoſition will not be queſtioned by Pædo-Baptiſts, for whoſe ſake I now write as well as for the ſake of Anti-Pædo-Baptiſts: But that is evident thus.

Thoſe that have no Good, that is of the eſſence and ſubſtance of the Covenant, have no preſent intereſt in the Covenant: but unleſs Infants have that Good afore declared, they have no Good that is of the eſſence and ſubſtance of the Covenant; *Ergo.* This Argument in the whole of it is ſo obvious to every ordinary underſtanding, at leaſt will ſo evidently appear upon a diligent ſearch, that I ſhall ſurceaſe the proof it, and only add one more Argument, and proceed to the ſecond enquiry.

Arg. 4. If the Infant-ſeed of Believers, as received into Covenant, and as having thoſe Promiſes made to them, have not the Good afore expreſt, then the Covenant would be no ſecurity to any of them, nor any ground of hope to their Parents as to their future happineſs in caſe of their death in their pure Infant-ſtate, before they have perſonally taken hold of the Covenant themſelves: but the Covenant is ſome ſecurity to the Infant-ſeed of believing Parents, and may be ſome ground of hope to their Parents as to their future happineſs in caſe of their death in their pure Infant-

ſtate,

ſtate; *Ergo.* If the Seed of Believers have neither a diſcharge from the guilt of Original ſin, nor any Propriety or Intereſt in God, nor Right to Salvation by the Covenant and Promiſes thereof entred with, or made to them; how is it poſſible that either the Covenant or any Promiſe of it ſhould be any ſecurity to them, or any ground of hope to their Parents that they ſhall be ſaved in caſe of death in their pure Infant-ſtate? and if they have no ſecurity, nor their Parents any ground of hope as to their future happineſs from the Covenant, then the Covenant and Promiſes would be wholly inſignificant, and of no uſe or advantage at all either to Parents or Children, in reſpect of all thoſe that die in that ſtate; and how conſiderable a part of the Seed of Believers as well as of others die in that ſtate, is known to all men. But now it ſeems to be altogether unreaſonable to imagine that God ſhould extend his Covenant to the Seed of his People, and ſeal it by an outward Sign or Token, and yet neither the Covenant nor any one Promiſe of it be of any uſe or advantage at all, either to Parents or Children in reſpect of ſo great a part of their Seed. From all I conceive it will undeniably follow, that the Infant-ſeed of Believers and that univerſally have, as received into Covenant, and having theſe two grand Promiſes of it in ſpecial made unto them as the Seed of ſuch Parents, the whole Good afore declared: as for their ſtate, they are actually under the Covenant of Grace, and have an abſolute diſcharge from the guilt of Original ſin; as the inſeparable effect and conſequence thereof, they have a preſent actual propriety in God; he is their God, and as ſuch under an obligation to make good unto them the whole Covenant according to the true tenour of it; they have a preſent

Right

Right to future Salvation, and answerably under an infallible certainty of injoying it, supposing their non-forfeiture of that their Right, which during their pure Infant-state they are incapable to do. But to proceed.

Secondly, Wherein does the Good of having the Covenant with the Promises thereof appertaining to them ratifie d, sealed and confirmed to the Infant-seed of Believers by an outward Sign or Token consist?

As previous to the resolution of this question, two things may be observed in general.

First, That Adult-Believers are equally and alike concerned in it with Infants; inasmuch as whatever Good the Adult have by the ratification, sealing and confirmation of the Covenant and Promises thereof unto them, the same Good have Infants by the sealing, ratification and confirmation of the Covenant and Promises thereof by an outward Sign and Token unto them, and so *vice versa*.

Secondly, That to have the Covenant and Promises of it ratified, sealed and confirmed by an outward Sign and Token, is a Good, is sufficiently secured by the very Institution of a Sign and Token for that end and purpose, taken in conjunction with the Wisdom and Goodness of God instituting: an Infinite wise and good God would not institute an outward Sign and Token for such an end and purpose, did it not, as serving to that end and purpose, conduce to the Good and Benefit of his People whether Infants or Adult; so that it is a Good, is certain, though we should not fully apprehend wherein that Good does consist: But more particularly and directly to the question.

The great Good of having the Covenant and Promises ratified, sealed and confirmed by an outward

Sign

Sign or Token, I conceive, conſiſts in the additional aſſurance given unto Men thereby of their injoyment of that Good granted to, and ſetled upon them by the Covenant and Promiſes; for though it is certain the verity and faithfulneſs of God is a full and infallible aſſurance unto Men of their injoyment of whatever Good is covenanted and promiſed to them, ſuppoſing the performance of what duty is required on their parts, he is a God *that cannot lye*; but yet the ratification and confirmation of the Covenant and Promiſes by an outward Sign is, *quoad homines*, an additional aſſurance to them that they ſhall enjoy that Good. The caſe is one and the ſame, both in reſpect of the confirmation by a Seal and Token, and by an Oath, the Promiſes as abſolutely conſidered, were as ſure and certain before the Oath of God was given as after, yet the Apoſtle tells us that God confirmed his Promiſe with an Oath, and ſhews the Good deſigned to us thereby, *viz. That we might have more ſtrong Conſolation*, Heb. 6. 16, 17, 18. God deals with Men after the manner of Men, and with reſpect to their preſent ſtate of Imperfection. Now the addition of a Seal does add to the confirmation of any Promiſes or Contracts among Men, and gives greater aſſurance of the performance of them, and conſequently of their injoyment of the Good promiſed to whom or with whom ſuch Promiſes and Contracts are made, than they would do were there no Seal annexed: hence we may ſay, that the Covenant and Promiſes of God as taken abſolutely in themſelves, without conſideration to their Author, are ſtrengthened and confirmed by the Seal or Token annexed, and conſequently the Seal or Token is a further aſſurance to thoſe with or to whom they are made that they

ſhall

ſhall injoy the Good covenanted and promiſed: and beſides, while the People of God are in this ſtate of Imperfection, their Knowledge and Faith are imperfect, they are apt to frame their notions of God by what they ſee and experience among Men; hence the adding of a Seal or Token to the Covenant is of great advantage to their Faith.

Object. If any ſhall ſay, It's true, to have the Covenant and Promiſes thereof ſealed and confirmed by an outward Sign or Token is in this reſpect a great Good to Adult-Believers, who have a capacity to reflect upon the Sign or Token, and improve it for the advantage of their Faith; but what does this concern Infants, who can make no ſuch uſe or improvement of it as applyed to them? and then what Good is it to them, or wherein does the Good of its being applyed to them conſiſt? Suppoſing the Promiſes to appertain to them, they of themſelves are an infallible ſecurity to them as to their injoyment of the Good promiſed, and as for the Sign and Token, as they have no Faith to ſtrengthen, ſo had they any, yet they are utterly incapable of making any improvement of it to that purpoſe.

To that I ſhall only ſay: Firſt, that the Covenant and Promiſes, as entred with and made to them, taken abſolutely in themſelves, being ratified, ſealed and confirmed by an outward Sign or Token, the Good contained in them is more fully aſcertained and aſſured to them. But,

Secondly, Let it be obſerved what reference and ſubſerviency according to the revealed will of God the Application of the Token of the Covenant to Infants has to his continuing unto them their Covenant-ſtate, and anſwerably vouchſafing them the Good covenanted and promiſed to them: The Lord himſelf

tells

tells *Abraham*, that *the Man-child that was not circumciſed had broken the Covenant*, Gen. 17. 14. Whether that will prove that the Infant-ſeed of the People of God their having the Token of the Covenant applyed to them, and bearing it, be an indiſpenſible condition of their holding their Covenant-intereſt and ſtate, and injoying the Good promiſed, I ſhall not determine; only this may be ſaid, that the bare privation or want of Circumciſion was not to be accounted a breach of the Covenant; for then all dying before the eighth day had been deprived of the Benefit of the Covenant, and conſequently *David* could not have comforted himſelf by that Conſideration, that he ſhould go to his Child, and not it return to him, ſays *Gerhard*, *Eam* (ſcil.) *comminationum quæ de Circumciſione extat*, Gen. 17. 14. *Non ad caſum privationis, ſed ad contemptum Sacramenti pertinere*; but whether the neglect of it from errour as well as contempt, might not be of ſuch a fatal conſequence to the Child, will appear at that day, when things now hidden are brought to light. This muſt be added, that 'tis a paſſage might juſtly make the hearts not only of Contemners, but of all Neglecters of Infant-Baptiſm to tremble; we know not but that God may have made the Application of the Token of the Covenant to the Infant-ſeed of his People abſolutely neceſſary to his continuing his Covenant to them, and to his vouchſafing them the Benefits of it; he may eſtabliſh his Covenant upon what terms himſelf pleaſes; and if this ſhould be found true, it is eaſie to apprehend how much the intereſt of the Seed of Believers in the Covenant and Promiſes is ſtrengthened by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them, and conſequently how great a Good it is to them:

The

The ſprinkling of the bloud of the Paſchal Lamb upon the door-poſts of the houſes of the *Iſraelites* could not be improved by any of their firſt-born who were yet in their pure Infant-ſtate, yet was neceſſary to their ſecurity from the deſtroying Angel: there may be an indiſpenſible connexion between ſome duties and the injoyment of Good promiſed, the reaſon of which lyes in the alone Will and Pleaſure of God, at leaſt is reſerved as a ſecret in his own breſt: Two things are plain to me, and a third is doubtful.

First, 'Tis plain to me, that in caſe the Seed of Believers have no intereſt in the Covenant, nor are to have the Token of it applyed, Parents have no other ground in Scripture for their hope that they ſhall reap any of the ſaving Benefits purchaſed by Chriſt, at leaſt that dye in their Infancy, then may be acted with reference to the Seed of the worſt of Heathens.

Secondly, This is alike plain to me, that all the Seed of Believers through their intereſt in the Covenant and Promiſes thereof and having the Token of the Covenant applyed to them, do, ſuppoſing their death in their pure Infant-ſtate, infallibly injoy all thoſe Bleſſings and Benefits.

Thirdly, This is doubtful to me, how God will deal with, and what is the caſe of their Infant-ſeed, who through the darkneſs of their underſtandings diſclaim their Intereſt in the Covenant, and neglect thereupon to apply the Token of the Covenant to them: I would hope the beſt, but I muſt ſay the Scriptures to me give more ground of fear than of hope.

In the laſt place it muſt be conſidered, that the Token of the Covenant is applyed to the Infant-ſeed of Believers not only with reference to their Good and

Benefit

Benefit during their pure Infant-ſtate, but alſo with reference to their Good as they grow up to years of Maturity, when they are capable of making an improvement of it; and how great it may be, and, if they were inſtructed in the uſe they are to make of it, it will be then unto them, ſhall if the Lord will be ſhewed under the next general Head. But before I proceed to that, ſome doubts that may ariſe from, and ſome Objections that may ſeem to oppoſe what has been hitherto ſaid, muſt be ſatisfied and removed out of the way. We have ſeen a twofold Good and Benefit that the Infant-ſeed of Believers have by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them. Firſt, They have thereby a ſolemn admiſſion and incorporation into the viſible Body, Kingdom or Family of Chriſt, whereunto, and as the ground of which, they are ſuppoſed and granted, yea affirmed to have a Political or Relative Union with Chriſt the Head. Secondly, They have thereby the Covenant with the Promiſes thereof ſealed and confirmed to them in the ratification of the Covenant; they have conſequently a diſcharge and immunity from the guilt and condemning power of Original ſin ſealed and confirmed to them in the ratification and confirmation of the Promiſes; they have a preſent intereſt and propriety in God, and right to future Salvation ſealed and confirmed to them.

CHAP. VIII.

Several Objections answered. The first raised from the impossibility that God should do so much for the Seed of Believers, and yet not regenerate them. That answered, and the contrary thereunto shewed to be highly rational. The second is, that what they have is only according to a visible appearance, but not in reality and truth. That answered, where it is shewed what they appear or seem to have, they must needs have in reality and truth. The third raised from the inconsistency of granting the Infant-seed of Believers so much with the Doctrine of Saints Perseverance. That fully answered. The fourth raised from the inconsistency of granting so much to all the Seed of Believers with the Doctrine of Election. That fully answered. The fifth is, that the Infants of Believers have nothing beyond what the Seed of others have. That briefly answered.

Obj. 1. POssibly some, notwithstanding all that hath been said, will yet urge utter improbability that God should proceed so far in the expressions of his Grace and Love to the Infant-seed of his People, and grant them so great and so many Priviledges,

as

as hath been affirmed he doth, and yet not regenerate and sanctifie them, if not in their Infancy, yet as they grow up to years of Maturity; and consequently the Baptism of Infants, as grounded upon a supposition of their being Confederats with their Parents in the Covenant of Grace, will very probably prove, or rather absolutely necessitate the Doctrine of falling from, and losing saving Grace, and overthrow the Doctrine of Saints Perseverance. And may be they will say, this may be rationally concluded on a fourfold ground yet unanswered.

1. That it is utterly improbable that any should have an union with Christ, a discharge from the guilt of Original sin, a propriety in God, be owned by him as his People, and have an actual right to Salvation, who are not regenerated and sanctified.

2. That it is alike utterly improbable that God should express so much Grace and Love to, do so much for, and confer so great Priviledges and Benefits upon any that he hath not elected, nor ever intended to bring to Salvation; but on the other hand purposed to, and answerably doth leave them to themselves to be fitted by their own sin and apostacy as vessels of wrath and destruction.

3. That it is alike improbable that any should be in Covenant with the Holy Ghost, and yet have no benefit by him, either in regard of his saving Operations, or any other Operations that have a direct tendency to their future Salvation.

4. That the Token of the Covenant hath such a reference to Regeneration and Sanctification, as that doth, if not necessarily, yet very probably prove that they are, at least shall be regenerated and sanctified, who have *coram Deo* a right to it.

Answ. Though I conceive this Objection hath been sufficiently obviated by what hath been already said, yet seeing the grounds it is bottomed upon are plausible, and have a seeming weight in them, I shall speak a little more to it, and shall

1. Shew the insufficiency of these grounds to prove what is inferred and concluded from them.

2. I shall shew the rationality, yea necessariness, (*Consideratis, considerandis*) that God should proceed so far in his vouchsafements to the Infant-seed of his People, and yet not proceed to their universal Regeneration, or Sanctification, no nor absolutely oblige himself to regenerate or sanctifie any of them. To begin with the

1. First, And thus the insufficiency of these grounds will appear by a distinct consideration of them.

1. Then what is said, *viz.* that in case God hath done so much for, and vouchsafed so much to the Infant-seed of Believers as hath been affirmed, then it may seem utterly improbable but that he should regenerate and sanctifie them: for can it be imagined that God should grant unto any an union with Christ, discharge them from the guilt of sin, bring them so nigh to, and give them a propriety in himself, and a right to future Salvation, who are not renewed and sanctified; but on the other hand are in their natural pollution, deprived of his Image, vitiated and corrupted with the seeds and principles of all manner of sin? will an infinitely holy God do all that for unholy ones, for those that are unregenerated, spiritually dead, and in their blood? Sure it cannot be; either they must be regenerated, and at least the seeds and habits of Grace wrought in them, or no such

such Priviledges can be rationally supposed to be granted to them.

Answ. Were but the thoughts and imaginations of men wholly subdued unto Christ, no other reply were necessary, save only what our Lord Christ made to him that murmured, when those that came last into the Vineyard had an equal reward with those that came first, *Mat.* 20. 15. *Is it not lawful to do what he will with his own?* Shall any man's eye be evil, because he is good? If God will do so much for the Infant-seed of his People, though it goes no farther, who can with any shew of reason except against him? nay have not all cause to admire and adore his goodness and condescension. Shall vain man undertake to dictate unto God, or injoyn him his way? And therefore this may well be dismist as wholly insufficient to prove the conclusion inferred from it. I shall therefore only add; If we consider the infinite Goodness of God to sinners, yea Adult as well as Infants, and that it is only during their Infant-state, or before the habits and principles of sin exert themselves in outward gross acts to an apostatizing from him that all this is done for, and vouchsafed to them; as also that what he doth for them is in a peculiar manner out of love and respect to their Parents; we should soon see this is so far from being improbable, that it is rather highly probable.

2. To the second thing pleaded, namely the improbability that God should go so far, and vouchsafe so great Priviledges to those that he hath not elected, or appointed to Salvation, and whom, after he hath done so much for, he will yet leave to themselves, and suffer them to fall away and finally perish. And thus it may be said, if God bears no other love to them than

he doth to the Non-elect, why doth he do so much for them, and grant them so great Priviledges? if he doth bear a greater love to them than he bears to the rest of Mankind, why doth he leave them to themselves, and suffer them to forfeit the Priviledges he hath afore vouchsafed to them?

Answ. I cannot apprehend why this should be lookt upon at all as improbable, especially if we consider these three or four things.

1. What a blessed state Man at his first Creation was put into; how great Priviledges were granted to him, and to all Mankind in him; and yet we know God did after suffer him to fall, and all Mankind in him.

2. If we consider how much God doth still for, and how great Priviledges he still vouchsafes to the Non-elect, as well as the Elect, and that in a subserviency to their future Salvation. And what is pleaded to evince the improbability of God's going so far, and doing so much for the Non-elect Seed of Believers, and yet after leaving them to themselves, may with the like strength of reason be pleaded against his doing so much for, and granting such Priviledges to the Adult, who are not elected, and answerably who are left to the blindness of their own minds, and hardness of their own hearts to their final ruine and destruction. This is undeniable, that as for the external means of Salvation, with various Priviledges and Advantages subordinate thereunto, they are indifferently vouchsafed both to the Elect and the Non-elect. How great and how many Priviledges and Advantages had the *Jews* in general subserving their Salvation, and yet how great a number of them appertained not to the election of Grace, is known unto all. And hence,

3. That

3. That God ſhould do ſo much for, and vouchſafe ſo great Priviledges to the Seed of Believers in general, and that with a direct reference to their future Salvation, though many among them appertain not to the election of Grace, will appear leſs improbable, if we conſider the rationality that God ſhould do more, and vouchſafe greater Priviledges and Advantages unto them, and that with reference to their Salvation, than he doth for, and vouchſafe to the reſt of Mankind. The peculiar Love and Favour he bears to his People makes this very rational, yea, I may ſay, ſomewhat neceſſary. It cannot be rationally ſuppoſed, but that, when God bears ſo great a love to Parents, he ſhould do ſomewhat more, and vouchſafe greater Advantages to their Seed, in a ſubſerviency to their future Salvation, than he doth for, and vouchſafes to others. And yet

4. This will ſeem leſs improbable, if we conſider that in what God doth for, and vouchſafes to the Seed of his People, he hath a peculiar reſpect to the Elect among them. 'Tis in ſpecial for their ſakes that the Priviledges of the Seed of Believers are ſo great. It hath pleaſed God to make his choice of Perſons to Salvation very much in the lines of particular Perſons; hence he uſually caſts Elect Children upon Elect Parents; though he hath left a liberty to himſelf to paſs by whom he pleaſeth, and ſometimes to take in ſuch who are of the lines and poſterity of the wicked; yet his Election lies very much in and among the Seed of Elect Parents, and for their ſakes, and in a ſubſerviency to their Salvations, he doth ſo much for, and vouchſafes ſo great Priviledges to the Seed of his People in general. That all the Seed of Believers ſhould have been elected to Salvation, would have been attended

with great inconveniencies, and that upon divers accounts, as might easily be shewed; yet it hath pleased God to lay his Election very much among them. 'Tis rare but that some one or more of the Seed of believing Parents evidence their Election by a personal taking hold of the Covenant, as they grow up to years of Maturity. Yea it is sometimes found, that all the Seed of some believing Parents give good ground to hope they are such as God hath ordained to life. Now with respect to them, and for their sakes God hath done so much, and vouchsafed so great Priviledges to their Seed in general: so that all things considered, that God should grant the Priviledges assigned to the Seed of Believers, and yet after leave some of them to themselves, and suffer them to forfeit their own Mercies, and finally perish, carries not the least improbability in it.

3. For that which may yet further be pleaded, *viz.* The improbability that any should be in Covenant with the holy Spirit, and yet have no benefit by him, either in regard of any saving, no, nor any common operations that have a direct conducency to their future Salvation. To that I would say in the general, that how improbable soever this may seem to be, yet no sound Argument can be drawn therefrom, to prove the Conclusion inferred in the forementioned Objection. God may receive the Infant-seed of Believers into Covenant with himself, and that universally, and vouchsafe them all the Good and all the Priviledges afore assigned to them, and yet it will not necessarily follow from thence, that any such Operations of the Spirit should be granted to them. This is evident from what hath been already said, yea let me

say

ſay, this is no way improbable. This will appear, if we conſider two or three things.

1. What intereſt and hand the Spirit of God hath in all that is done for, and vouchſafed to them; hence it cannot be ſaid they have no benefit by him. This might be abundantly evidenced, but that I ſhould inlarge this diſcourſe quite beyond the bounds deſigned for it: And therefore

2. Conſider the ſpecial office and work of the Spirit; and thus we ſhall find the office and work of the Spirit more eſpecially relate to the fitting and preparing the Elect unto Glory, through their Sanctification, and chearful performance of holy obedience unto God in Chriſt, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 13. with 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. Now it is vaſtly more improbable, that the Spirit ſhould perform any part of that work whereunto he is deſigned for the preparing veſſels of Mercy unto Glory upon the hearts of the Non-elect, than that, though in Covenant with him, he ſhould ſuſpend the performance of that work in or upon them: Eſpecially if we conſider

3. What hath been already ſaid, *viz.* That the Promiſes of the Covenant conſtituting a Covenant-relation between God, both abſolutely and perſonally conſidered, and the Seed of Believers, as taken abſolutely and by themſelves only, oblige the ſeveral perſons in the divine eſſence to act for their Good, Benefit and Advantage, according to the tenour of the Covenant, that is according to the diſtinct Promiſes of the Covenant, and the terms or conditions upon which they are made. Now there being no Promiſe made to the individual Infants of Believers, aſſuring them of any ſuch Operations of the Spirit, hence the Spirit is under no obligation to vouchſafe them to this

or

or that individual Infant, antecedent to their personal taking hold of the Covenant; which that the Elect shall do, is secured as by the Covenant between the Father and the Son; so by those indefinite Promises of divine teachings and the like, made to the Church in general, of which before; so that here is yet nothing improbable.

4. And lastly, That which is pleaded to countenance the Conclusion in the Objection, is the reference that the Token of the Covenant, whether Circumcision, or Baptism, had or hath to Regeneration and Sanctification. And thus it is supposed by many to have such a reference as lays a sure ground for the Conclusion, *viz.* that in case Infants have such an union with Christ, and Covenant-relation unto, and interest in God as intitles them to the Token of the Covenant, they must be granted to be regenerated, and thereby initially sanctified.

Answ. That the Token of the Covenant hath some reference to Regeneration and Sanctification is evident from those Texts usually insisted upon; *John* 3.5. *Eph.* 5.26. *Tit.* 3.5. but what that reference is, is not agreed on by all. Some say it is an outward Sign or Symbol of Regeneration, and consequently an evidence of the Party's present Regeneration to whom it is applyed, and sometimes it is called by the men of this perswasion a Seal of Regeneration. Others attribute the conferring of the holy Spirit to it, by whom Regeneration is wrought, and so they conceive the Spirit is ordinarily communicated, if not by, yet in a concomitancy with the Application of the Token of the Covenant, by means whereof at least the Seeds and Principles of Regeneration, at least some kind of disposition leading thereunto, are

wrought

wrought in all that have it rightfully applyed to them. Now I shall not stay upon a particular discussion of these different apprehensions of Men. It may suffice to shew that the Token of the Covenant may have and hath a true and proper reference to Regeneration, on the account of which those allusions to it, made use of by Christ, and the Apostle in the places forementioned, are genuine and proper; and yet the Conclusion pleaded for cannot be rationally inferred therefrom. And thus we may allow the Token of the Covenant to have a twofold reference to Regeneration and Sanctification.

1. It is significative of both, as the way through which the Elect are prepared for, and brought into Glory. Hence that Allusion requires not that Regeneration antecede, nor yet that the Spirit be conferred by, or in a concomitancy with the Application of the Token of the Covenant, it only supposeth the Token to be of such use, *viz.* to signifie and represent the way through which God doth bring his Elect to Salvation; and it is only a Sign of present Regeneration to the Adult, as the Application of it to them doth suppose them Heirs of Salvation that way, *viz.* through Regeneration and renewing of the Spirit; but in respect of those that are Heirs another way, *viz.* through the Promise made to them as the Seed of such Parents, it only signifies and represents the way how they shall, supposing them ordained thereunto, be brought to Salvation; but whether they are already regenerated, or yet to be regenerated, cannot be determined from that Allusion.

2. The Token of the Covenant refers to Regeneration as it is a seal and confirmation of the Promises of Regeneration; but then it can only seal and confirm those

those Promises according to their nature and tenour, and consequently the Promises being only indefinite, respecting the Seed of Believers in general, as Members of the visible Church, the sealing and confirmation must be answerable. And thus it shall be granted, that God by the Token of the Covenant as applyed to the Seed of his People, doth seal and confirm unto them those Promises of divine teachings, putting his Laws in the minds, and writing them in the hearts of their Seed. Hence the Promise *Deut.* 30.6. is expressed in that phrase, *I will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy Seed*; plainly shewing that Circumcision (and the same is true of Baptism) hath some reference to the Conversion and Regeneration of their Seed; and that was this; it did seal and confirm the Promises concerning the Conversion and Regeneration of their Seed, which Promises being (as I have said) only indefinite, the sealing must needs be proportionable. So that though we grant, yea affirm, that the Infant-seed of Believers have all that Good, and all those Priviledges afore expresst vouchsafed to them, yet it will not necessarily follow, neither can it be certainly concluded from thence, that they are, or shall be truly regenerated or sanctified. God may proceed so far in the expressions of his Grace and Love to them, and yet there is no necessity he should proceed to their Regeneration or Sanctification; nor yet oblige himself thereunto. As for those preparatory Operations of the Spirit, whereby some kind of predispositions towards a work of Grace, or a *posse agere* are wrought in them, though I conceive they may be granted without prejudice to those great Doctrines of special Grace and Perseverance; seing it is certain, there are many common works of the

Spirit

Spirit granted to those that never attain to true Grace, yet I conceive it is not necessary, that we do hold them to be granted to all the Infant-seed of Believers, no not to all, yea or any of the Elect among them. God may take the Infant-seed of his People into Covenant with himself together with their Parents, and thereby set them free from the condemning power of Original sin, put himself under an obligation to act as a God towards them, according to the tenour of the Covenant into which they are taken, appoint the Token of the Covenant to be applyed to them, and thereby admit them into the Church or Kingdom of Christ as visible, and vouchsafe them all those Priviledges of his Church aforementioned, and yet not vouchsafe them any Operations of the Spirit whether special or common.

2. That it is very rational to suppose, that though God hath expressed his Grace and Love to the Infant-seed of his People in all those glorious vouchsafements before expressed, yet that he should not proceed to their universal Regeneration and Sanctification, but should leave to himself a liberty, savingly to work upon whom he pleaseth, in a complyance with his eternal Purpose and Decree, and that when, and by what means he pleaseth, as himself sees meet. This will appear from a threefold Consideration,

1. First, That it is altogether unreasonable to suppose, yea morally impossible, that God should constitute a conditional Covenant between himself and Men, whether Infants or Adult, and yet should include the condition required of Men in, and thereby secure their performance of it by any Promise that is of the essence and substance of the Covenant as so considered. This is evident from what hath been already said, for

this

this would quite alter and change the nature of the Covenant, it would not then be a conditional, and consequently any Covenant at all in a proper sense, but an absolute Covenant, or rather a *compendium*, or *synopsis* of absolute Promises. And besides, persons must be supposed to have an Interest in the Covenant, before the condition of their Interest is performed by them, which (as I have said) is an absolute contradiction. Hence it will undeniably follow, that the Promises of the first Grace are not of the essence of the Covenant as conditionally made with particular persons, but appertain to the Covenant, as made with the Church or House of *Israel* collectively considered, and secure to the Elect the Grace required on Man's part to his admission into, or continuance in the Covenant, as conditionally made with particular Persons.

2. Consider how rational it is to suppose that God should (as it is certain he doth) require something of duty from Parents towards their Children, or something of duty from Children themselves, if not from both; upon the performance of, or failing in which he should continue, or discontinue their Covenant-state when they grow up to years of Maturity. The rationality of this supposal appears from the conformity and agreeableness of his so doing, to his dealings with all those he either offers his Covenant to, or enters Covenant with. Take it of Unbelievers to whom the Covenant is offered, there is something of duty required on their parts in order to their reception into Covenant, they are to take hold of it. Take it of Believers with whom the Covenant is actually entred; thus. There is no good promised, but something of duty is required on their parts

in

in order to the injoyment of it, and upon their non-performance of that duty, they may be and usually are deprived of it: And why should it not be alike rational, that God should require somewhat of duty from them towards their Children, upon the non-performance of which he should withhold the Good promised, or should *not bring upon them* (as God speaks concerning *Abraham*) *the Good promised?* Yea in order to the continuance of that Covenant-state between God and themselves, there is somewhat of duty required on their parts, the performance of which, it's true, is secured to them another way; but however duty is required on their parts, upon their non-performance of which (might we suppose that possible) their Covenant-state would be discontinued, or they would be cast out of Covenant. And why should it not be alike rational for God to require somewhat of duty from Children themselves, in order to the continuance of their Covenant-state, when they grow up to a capacity of performing it, which that they shall universally do, it is no way necessary should be secured to them, as we may see more by and by. So that God's dealings with reference to the Seed of Believers are altogether rational, as suiting with his dealings with all Men to whom he offers his Covenant, or with whom he doth actually establish it.

3. Consider, that in case either God had not proceeded so far in extending his Covenant and Promises, and thereby vouchsafing to the Infant-seed of his People that Good and those Priviledges afore declared; or had proceeded further, *viz.* to their universal Regeneration, or to the securing it unto them;

one

one of these inconveniencies would have necessarily followed thereupon, either

1. No Infants must have dyed in their Infancy, which yet that innumerable do, our dayly observation assures us: Or else,

2. All Infants dying in their Infancy must have eternally perished, and been everlastingly *separated from the presence of God and the glory of his Power*: Or,

3. In case any were saved, it must be, not by vertue of the Covenant of Grace entred with, or any Promise made unto them, but merely from an absolute power and prerogative in God to save or condemn whom he will of faln Mankind, without respect had to the Covenant of Grace established in the Blood of Christ: Or,

4. All the Seed of Believers, whether dying in their Infancy, or living to years of Maturity, must infallibly be saved: Or,

Lastly, Some might be truly regenerated, and have a saving work of Grace upon their hearts, and yet after finally fall away and eternally perish. In case he should not have extended his Covenant to the Seed of his People, as our Opposers imagine, or if he had extended it to them definitely, and yet they should not have had that Good, and those Priviledges pleaded for; then one of the three former inconveniencies would have followed: or if having so extended his Covenant to them, he should thereby have obliged himself to work Grace in them universally; then the one or the other of the two latter inconveniences would have followed.

Obj. But it may be said, the Covenant and Promises may be made indefinitely with, and to the Seed of Believers,

Believers, and then none of these inconveniences will follow.

Answ. To that I answer. I have before proved that they do appertain to them definitely; or suppose we should grant them to appertain to them only indefinitely, yet this inconveniency would follow, *viz.* That as the Covenant gives no assurance that any of their Infants (who have one or more surviving their pure Infant-state, and growing up to years of Maturity) dying in their Infancy shall be saved: So Parents have no certain ground to hope that any one of theirs so dying are saved. That none have any certain ground to hope for what the Covenant gives no assurance of, will be readily granted on all hands. Now suppose the Covenant or Promises are entred with, and made to the Seed of Believers only indefinitely, that they give no assurance that all, yea or any of the Seed of such Believers dying in their Infancy shall be saved, will evidently appear thus; because the Covenant may stand firm, and the Promises of it fully accomplished in the Conversion and Salvation of some one or more of those that survive their Infant-state, and grow up to years of Maturity. And hence by the way, how can a supposal of that be a sufficient ground for the Application of the Token of the Covenant, of which the Covenant gives no assurance? And further I conceive, it will and must be granted by those that conceive the Covenant is entred only indefinitely with the Seed of Believers, that it gives assurance of Salvation to Infants dying in their Infancy, only so far as it gives assurance to them of Regeneration in their Infancy. Now it is evident that the Covenant gives no assurance of Regeneration to any of the Seed of Believers in their pure Infant-state: If it give assurance

to any of Regeneration in that ſtate, it is either as they are Elect, or as they are the Seed of ſuch Parents, or by vertue of ſome Revelation that God hath made in his Word, that he will regenerate, at leaſt ſome of the Seed of his People, as having the Covenant ſo entred with them in their Infancy: But now it is evident,

1. That the Covenant doth not aſſure any of Regeneration in their Infancy, as they are Elect, for then all the Elect Seed of Believers ſhould be regenerated in their Infancy; the contrary whereunto is evident, in that many of the Seed of Believers, in whom there is not the leaſt ſhew or appearance of Grace from their very Infancy till they come to full age, yea poſſibly till they come to old age, are yet at laſt converted and brought to a ſaving cloſe with Chriſt. To ſay that theſe might have a work of Grace in their Infancy will be attended with too bad conſequences than to be granted, without better proof than I ſuppoſe can be brought.

2. That the Covenant doth not give aſſurance of Regeneration to the Seed of Believers in their Infancy, as ſuch, will, I doubt not, be readily granted without further proof.

3. That God hath no where revealed that he would regenerate any of the Seed of his People in their Infancy, is ſufficiently proved from the utter ſilence of the Scriptures as to any ſuch Revelation. And for any to plead experience or obſervation in this caſe, that can ſignifie but little, inaſmuch as that Grace ſome of the Seed of Believers have, of the time or means, when or whereby it was wrought, they can give no account; it might yet be wrought either by Parental Inſtruction, or ſome other means vouch-

ſafed

safed consequent to their pure Infant-state. Now then the Covenant giving no assurance of the Regeneration of any of the Seed of Believers in their pure Infant-state, it gives no assurance of any of their Salvation, and consequently Parents have no certain ground to bottom a hope upon, that any of theirs dying in their Infant-state are saved. All the hope they can have hath only a possibility, or at utmost a probability for its foundation; and that, it may be too, weakned by a greater probability of the contrary, it seeming vastly more rational to me to suppose, that, in case the Covenant were entred with them only indefinitely, seeing God hath given no assurance that he would regenerate any in their Infancy, and in doing it when they come to years of Maturity, he makes good his Promise as fully, as though he did it in their Infancy; he should suffer those that he hath ordained to Salvation to live to years of Maturity, and answerably bring them to Glory according to his ordinary way, viz. *through Sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the Truth, called thereunto by the Gospel*, than that he should go out of his ordinary way, and regenerate them immediately by his Spirit, without the subserviency of any outward means, especially considering what inconveniencies would attend, through the corruption of Men, a supposition of his so doing, and consequently that believing Parents, if they must not mourn as those that have no hope, yet they could not but mourn, as having but little hope. But now according to the way that I have proceeded in, allowing the Covenant and Promises to be entred and made to the Seed of Believers definitely, and allowing them to have all that Good assigned to them by vertue of their Interest in the Covenant and Promises thereof,

and yet bounding that Good, as I have done, unſpeakable Good accrews to them by that their Covenant-intereſt, and the Application of the Token of the Covenant, and yet none of theſe inconveniencies enſue thereupon. From the whole of what hath been ſaid, as we ſee it cannot be rationally concluded, that, in caſe God goes ſo far in the expreſſions of his Love and Grace to the Seed of his People, as to grant them that Good, thoſe Priviledges and Benefits, as hath been declared he doth, that then he muſt neceſſarily go further, and actually regenerate and ſanctifie them, either in their Infancy, or as they grow up to years of Maturity: So that it is very rational to ſuppoſe that he ſhould go ſo far, as hath been expreſt, and yet ſhould go no further, but ſhould reſerve a liberty to himſelf, as to regenerate and ſanctifie whom he pleaſeth, ſo to do it when, and by what means himſelf pleaſeth.

And from all, I conceive, an Argument might be drawn, an anſwer unto which would (if I miſtake not) be clogged with no ſmall difficulties, both to prove the Covenant-intereſt of the Seed of Believers, and the dueneſs of the Application of the Token thereof to them upon the account thereof, and alſo to confirm their injoyment of all that Good, and all thoſe Priviledges and Benefits affirmed to accrew to them. But I ſhall not ſtay upon it: I conceive both are ſufficiently done already. Let me rather excite all Men to admire the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God in doing ſo much for the Seed of his People, and yet providing for the free exerciſe of his own Soveraignty over and among them, as well as others, and his Juſtice in condemning none, but ſuch as wilfully ſin away their own Mercies.

Obj.

Obj. 1. It will be said, 'Tis true the Infant-seed of Believers, and that universally, visibly appear to us, and may be hoped according to a judgment of Charity, to have all that Good, and all those Benefits and Priviledges afore assigned to them, as they are the Seed of such Parents, conferred upon and ensured to them by the Covenant, as confirmed by the Application of the Token thereof to them: but that they have all that Good, and all those Benefits and Priviledges really and truly actually granted to, and conferred upon them in their pure Infant-state, is more than we can affirm; inasmuch as secret things belong to God, but things revealed to us and our Children.

Answ. I confess, most that have pleaded for Infant-Baptism upon this ground, *viz.* their Interest in the Covenant, do too commonly express themselves to this purpose; but it seems past all rational doubt, and is so to me, that what they visibly appear to have by vertue of their Interest in the Covenant, that they have in reality and truth. Hence as they do not so much as visibly appear to have a real work of Grace upon their hearts, there being no Promise securing that to them; so for all the Good and all the Benefits and Blessings afore assigned to them, they have them in reality and truth. This is evident from a double Consideration;

1. First, That they are the Seed of true Believers, such as have truly and really performed the conditions of the Covenant of Grace, and consequently are really and internally in Covenant themselves.

2. That the Seed of Believers Interest in the Covenant, and having all that Good, and all those Benefits granted and conferred upon them thereby, depends not at all upon any qualifications in, or any act,

act or duty performed by them themselves, but flows merely from the Promises of the Covenant appertaining to them as the Seed of such Parents. Hence in case they only visibly appear to us to have all that Good, and all those Privileges before mentioned granted to, and conferred upon them, it must be either, because the Promises only visibly appear to us to appertain to them; or that all that Good, and all those Blessings only seem, or visibly appear to us to be contained in, granted and conferred by those Promises; or lastly, because the Promises of God do but seem or visibly appear to us to be true and faithful, but seem, or visibly appear to us to grant to, or confer upon those that are truly and really interested in them, that Good that is really contained in and intended by them. None of which things can be granted. Not the first, for I have before proved that the Promises do appertain to all the Seed of Believers, (I mean it shall of true Believers, as *Abraham* was) and that definitely to each one, or to every one of them in particular. Not the second, for undoubtedly God intends that very Good the Promises mention. Not the third, for the Promises are true and faithful, they do really and truly convey or confer an actual right to the Good contained in them to those, to whom they do really and truly appertain. And from hence it will unavoidably follow, that there is no place for a judgment of Charity to be exercised immediately and directly towards Infants. It's true, where we can only exercise a judgment of Charity towards Parents, there we can only exercise the same judgment of Charity towards their Children; but where Parents are known to be true Believers, (as in the instance of *Abraham*) there a judgment of Charity hath no-

thing to do with reference to their Seed. And we speak of the case of the Seed of Believers according to what their Parents are in deed and in truth, or are known to God to be. A judgment of Charity can only be acted towards Men with reference to, or in regard of their having performed the condition of the Promises, and consequently to their right to those Promises: But in the case of the Infants I speak of both these are certain. Hence undeniably what they visibly appear to have, they have in reality and truth.

Obj. 2. It may be objected, That to grant the Infant-seed of Believers, and that universally, all those Benefits and Priviledges afore assigned to them in truth and reality, will greatly weaken, if not utterly overthrow the Doctrine of Saints Perseverance: For we must then grant that some, who had a true and real Union with Christ, are discharged from the guilt and condemning power of sin; have a true and proper Interest in God as their God; and a present right to Salvation, may yet fall away and finally perish: For so it is certain some of the Seed of Believers do. Now if Union with Christ, a Covenant-state with God, a discharge from the guilt of sin, Propriety in God, and right to future Salvation, will secure none from Apostacy and finally perishing, what assurance can any have that they shall not fall away and finally perish? And thus while we endeavour to promote the joy and comfort of Saints one way, we shall destroy it another: while we endeavour to promote their joy and comfort by establishing their Childrens Interest in the Covenant of Grace, and assigning them so much Good, and so many Priviledges as interested therein, we shall destroy their joy and comfort by weakning the grounds of assurance, that themselves

ſelves have had of their own continuance in their Covenant-ſtate Godwards; while we endeavour to eſtabliſh their Childrens Covenant-ſtate, we ſhall leave them deſtitute of any ſure ground that themſelves ſhall be continued in theirs.

Anſw. What Union the Infant-ſeed of Believers, as ſuch have with Chriſt; what ſins they are diſcharged from the guilt and condemning power of; from whence their diſcharge from the guilt and condemning power of ſin doth ariſe and accrew to them; how far, and upon what terms the Promiſes giving them an Intereſt and Propriety in God lays an obligation upon him to communicate himſelf to, or act for their Good; as alſo what right they have to future Salvation, with the terms upon which they alone can actually injoy it (ſuppoſing their growth up to years of Maturity) are, hath been already declared, and muſt be carefully remembred: which being remembred and well weighed, I ſee no juſt reaſon, why the aſſignment of any or all thoſe Benefits and Priviledges, as afore explained and limited to them, ſhould be lookt upon as of the tendency mentioned. This I doubt not to affirm, though we grant all that hath been aſſigned to the Infant-ſeed of Believers, and that univerſally, and merely as ſuch; yet the Doctrine of Saints Perſeverance may be founded upon ſuch ſure bales, and maintained by ſuch Scripture demonſtrations, as that it ſhall ſtand firm, maugre the utmoſt oppoſition that can be made againſt it; ſo that nothing but their own deficiency in point of Faith, and aſſurance that themſelves are ſuch, and the due improvement of that aſſurance, can juſtly deprive any true Believer of the higheſt Plerophorie, that the Scriptures give an incouragement to endeavour after.

To

To attempt the fixing of that Doctrine upon its true basis, or improving and managing the various Arguments by which it may be established, would be excentrical to my present undertaking; yet let me say only thus much, that the assurance the Scripture gives us,

1. That there is an Election of Grace, not only of Persons so and so qualified, but of individual Persons to be so and so qualified.

2. That all appertaining thereunto are given of the Father unto Christ, with an explicite expression of his will to him, that he should lose none of them, but should raise them up at the last day, *viz.* to the life of Glory.

3. That the Covenant of Grace is immutable, when once that, *viz.* the Spirit, which renders it so, is actually given.

4. That the spiritual life of all Believers is laid up, and hidden with Christ in God, and that both in respect of the principles and conserving cause of it; and hence,

5. That there is an inseparable connexion between effectual Vocation and Glorification; I say, the assurance that the Scriptures give us of these things, with several others of the like importance, secures that Doctrine to the joy and comfort, yea and that unspeakable and full of Glory, of all Saints, though all the Benefits and Priviledges afore declared are granted to all the Infant-seed of Believers, among whom yet many finally fall away and perish: So that I conceive, that as what hath been granted to the Infant-seed of Believers, may greatly promote their Parents joy and comfort in them; so the granting of it hath no just tendency to allay their joy and comfort. The assu-

rance

rance of their own standing in their Covenant-state Godward hath an aptitude to yield their Children may have all that Good, and yet their own assurance of Perseverance in Grace, and infallibly coming to Glory, be no way weakned or prejudiced thereby.

Obj. 3. Possibly some may further say, To affirm that all the Seed of believing Parents have so much Good, and so many Benefits and Privileges by their Interest in the Covenant, and the Application of the Token of it unto them, seems inconsistent with the Doctrine of Election: for among other things it has been affirmed, that they have all universally, without any respect to Election or Preterition, a present right to Salvation, and that ratified, sealed and confirmed by the Token of the Covenant; and consequently that in case of their death in their pure Infant-state, they are infallibly saved. Which if so, we must either grant that some, that appertain not to the Election of Grace, are saved, which overthrows that Doctrine; or else affirm that all that die in their Infancy are elected: which as it is improbable in it self; so cannot be proved from Scripture.

Answ. That all the Infant-seed of true Believers dying in their pure Infant-state are infallibly saved, is past all rational doubt to me: and as for the Doctrine of Election, I apprehend not any solid reason, why it should seem at all inconsistent with it, seeing it is very rational to suppose, that all such Infants dying in that state do indeed appertain to the Election of Grace. As for what is objected concerning the improbability of that, and the want of Scripture to prove it, I conceive the quite contrary may be easily made to appear, *viz.* that it is not only highly probable in it self, but hath countenance from Scripture.

1. That

1. That it is not at all improbable, but rather highly probable, appears two ways.

1. From the confessed dealings of God with the Adult; that no Adult person can be saved without Regeneration, Faith and Repentance, is positively affirmed by our Lord Christ, *John* 3. 3. *Luke* 13. 3. with *Mark* 16. 16. Hence it must necessarily follow, and is granted by all that own the Doctrine of Election, that God does so order his Providence towards Men, that none among the Adult that appertain to the Election of Grace do die before a work of Regeneration be wrought in them, which is and must be done according to the ordinary way of God's working upon Man by the Word, as some way communicated to them: and how often is it found that Men and Women, whose lot is cast in places wholly remote from all ordinary means of Conversion, are yet possibly after many years, either brought to the means of Grace, or they carried to them, whereby they are savingly wrought upon, and thereby declared to have appertained to the Election of Grace? Now if so be the Providence of God for so long a time watcheth over such Men, whereby they are preserved from death: why should it seem at all improbable? But on the other hand it is highly probable, that God should order his Providence after the like manner towards Infants, and answerably continue life to the Non-elect, that so their falling short of the Good promised should be chargeable upon themselves; and take away by death only the Elect, whose Salvation is secured by the Promise made to them, as the Seed of such Parents: hereby the Salvation of the Elect is secured, and the Grace of God therein greatly magnified; when the Non-elect apostatizing from God,

his

his Justice in their condemnation will shine forth in greater brightnes and Glory. So that for God so to order his Providence towards the Seed of Believers is so far from any improbability, that it is greatly probable.

2. This will further appear, if we consider on the one hand, the infinite Goodness as well as Faithfulness of God, in conjunction with the Covenant and Promises entred with, and made to the Seed of Believers: and on the other hand, how many of those of their Seed that live to years of Maturity do apostatize, grow wicked, and consequently never injoy the Good covenanted and promised to them. It is not unusually, though very much without ground pleaded by our Opposers, as a reason why they cannot embrace the Doctrine and Practice of Infant-Baptism, that they can see little difference between the Children of Believers, and the Children of Unbelievers; the Children of the one prove wicked, as well as the Children of the other. Now though this be groundless, and proceeds in a great measure from mere prejudice, an evident difference being ordinarily to be seen: yet it must be confessed, it may be very rationally expected, that in case God has, as we affirm he has, extended his Covenant and Promises universally to the Seed of his People, more should injoy the Good of them, than can be rationally hoped do, in respect of, or among those that live to years of Maturity; though according to the true tenour of the Covenant, the Good of it is not infallibly secured to all; no nor to any that grow up to years of Maturity; and consequently the Apostacy of some, no way reflects upon the faithfulness of God; yet when he has extended his Covenant and Promises to them, considering how Good, and ready to do Good he is, it may not without

out

out the appearance of reason seem strange, that no more injoy that Good, than may be supposed to do, of those that live to years of Maturity; Hence it is highly probable, that all that die in their Infancy, or such as do indeed appertain to the Election of Grace, and answerably do injoy the full Good of the Covenant: and if we take in all that die in their Infancy, with those that growing up to years of Maturity do give assurance of their personal taking hold of the Covenant, not only the Faithfulness but the Goodness of God in extending and making good his Covenant to the Seed of his People, will shine forth in their glory and lustre. And how great a Good is it for the Seed of Believers to be taken into the same Covenant with their Parents will abundantly appear. The day of Judgment will, I doubt not, fully vindicate the Doctrine and Practice of Infant-Baptism from those unjust reproaches 'tis now by Men, yea by some good Men, in their darkness loaded with. But,

2. As this, *viz.* that only such among the Seed of Believers, as appertain to the Election of Grace, are taken away by death in their pure Infant-state, and consequently that all that are not elected do live to years of Maturity, wants not countenance from Scripture: for let it be observed, that we read in Scripture only of two of the Seed of true Believers, whose preterition was intimated or made known by special Revelation from God; and both these expressly recorded to have lived to years of Maturity, and to have forfeited their Interest in the Promises, by their own sin and Apostacy, these were *Ishmael* and *Esau*; the one forfeits his Interest by persecuting his Brother, the other by a prophane selling his Birthright. That the Preterition, or Non-election of

both

both these are signified by immediate Revelation from God, the Apostle shews *Rom.* 9. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. That both lived to years of Maturity, and forfeited their Interest the ways forementioned, is expressly declared, *Gen.* 21. 9. compared with *Gal.* 4. 29. *Gen.* 25. 29, 30, *&c.* with *Heb.* 12. 16. And it is very rational to suppose, that as it was with these two, the leading Instances and Patterns of God's dealings with the Non-elect-Seed of his People: So it is answerably with all that are not elected. And as we read only of these two, whose Preterition or Non-election were signified by special Revelation; and we see both of them live to years of Maturity, and forfeit their Interest in the Promises, by their own sin and Apostacy: So the Scripture particularly mentions the death only of one of the Seed of true Believers in their pure Infant-state, and gives sufficient ground to believe that that did appertain to the Election of Grace: This was *David*'s child by *Bathsheba*: that that child did belong to the Election of Grace, *David* questions not, but takes it for granted, as appears by his comforting himself upon its death, and professing his Faith, that he should go to it, and not it return to him.

Obj. 4. Possibly some will say, What hath been pleaded for on the behalf of the Infant-seed of Believers, is nothing but what is common to all Infants universally; in as much as all Mankind universally, as born into the World, are by Christ freed from the condemning power of Original sin, restored to the Love and Favour of God, and put into a state of Life and Salvation. And consequently if any Infants ought to have the Token of the Covenant applyed to them, then all ought alike to have it applyed unto them:

them: and on the other hand, if all ought not, then none ought to have it applyed unto them: Or suppose it should be granted, that some ought to have it applyed, yet their states and conditions would be no way bettered thereby, seeing what Good they are supposed to receive by it, is common to all.

Answ. I suppose this Objection will not be owned by many, but to those few that may, I would reply, by only asking this one Question; *viz.* How all Mankind come by all that Good? have they it by the Covenant of Grace? or by any other Covenant or Promise distinguished from and independent upon the Covenant of Grace? or have they it by a mere resultancy from Christ, undertaking and performing his Mediatory Office?

1. I say, have they it by the Covenant of Grace? sure that cannot be; for the Covenant of Grace is only actually established between God and *Abraham* and his Seed in their generations. *Behold*, saith God, *I establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy Seed after thee in their generations.* Now if so be the Covenant of Grace had been afore established with all Mankind, there had been no new Priviledge, or no Priviledge beyond what was common to Man in general, granted unto *Abraham*, or to any of his Seed. The establishment of the Covenant with *Abraham* and his Seed in their generations, as contradistinguished from the rest of Mankind, evidently proves 'tis not established with all Mankind; for then the establishing of it with him and his Seed had been a mere superfluous and insignificant thing, seeing it had been afore established with him and his Seed as of the number of Mankind, and that in the same sense, and with the like advantage both to him and them as

now

now it is. How far the Covenant is conditionally made, or rather offered to all Men concerns not our present purpose; seeing as so made or offered, it actually conveys not the Good promised to any, untill themselves have performed the conditions of it: But that it is actually made, or entred with all Mankind as such, is not only destitute of any proof from Scripture, but is directly contrary to the whole tenour of Scriptures. The *Gentiles* are said to be *strangers to the Covenants of Promise* antecedent to their Faith in Christ, and thereby becoming *Abrahams* Seed. The Promises are said to be made *to Christ*, and consequently appertain to Men only as in him: Hence *taking hold of the Covenant* is made necessary to a right to the Promises. But to insist upon this may well be accounted superfluous, as being a denial of what no body hath affirmed. Now then, if so be the Covenant of Grace, (wherein all the Good aforementioned is contained) be not actually entred and established with all Mankind as such, then neither all, nor any part of that Good can be come upon all Men, merely as such by the Covenant of Grace.

2. Have they it by vertue of any other Covenant or Promise contradistinct from, or independent upon the Covenant of Grace? That cannot be, because no such Covenant or Promise is to be found throughout the whole Scriptures. Let any such Covenant or Promise be shewed, and it shall be attended to. The only Scripture (so far as I can call to mind) that gives the least countenance to this supposal, is *Rom.* 5. 15, 16, 17, 18. But to that I shall only say two things. First, That the Apostle's bare using of the universal Particle *all*, is too weak a ground to lay such an Assertion upon, especially when no Covenant

or Promise can be found, by, or according to which the gift there spoken of is conferred upon all Men; And seeing it is evident that that term is sometimes used, when yet it is to be interpreted and understood in a limited sense, I need not cite places to those that are at all acquainted with the Scriptures. Secondly, I answer, that the Apostle's design is not to shew that the free Gift by Christ is of equal extent in the Donation of it with the condemnation arising from *Adam*'s sin: but his design is to compare *Adam*'s sin, and the purchase made by Christ, in regard of their respective efficacies, or in point of their respective causalities, or power to produce their different effects. In brief his design is only to shew, that seeing the offence of one Man, *viz.* *Adam*'s, was effective of the condemnation of all his Posterity; then the Grace of God and the Righteousness of Christ, (who is not merely Man, but God-Man) must needs be more effectual for their Justification and Life, who have an Interest in, and Union with him. That this is the Apostle's design, appears two ways.

First, From his assignment of a preheminence or superabundance to the Grace of God and this free Gift by Christ, above what is predicable of the Offence of *Adam*; which must needs respect the power and efficacy of the Grace of God and the free Gift by Christ to justifie and save; and of the Offence of *Adam* to condemn: for if it be we consider the Persons upon whom condemnation is come by *Adam*'s Offence, and the persons upon whom the free Gift is come unto Justification of Life, no such assignment of a preheminence and superabundancy to the Grace of God and the free Gift by Christ could be made, inasmuch as that condemnation is come upon all by *Adam*'s Offence, and the

free Gift can come but upon all. And where the Objects and Persons concerned are of equal extent, no preheminency can be assigned with respect unto them.

Secondly, This appears from the Apostle's variation of his phrase from *many* to *all*, and again from *all* to *many*, which plainly shews he had not so much respect to the Persons upon whom either Condemnation or the free Gift is come, as either to the things come upon them, or to the causes and means, from whence, or whereby those things are come upon them respectively.

Thirdly, I answer, Though the Apostle tells us the free Gift is come upon all to justification of Life; yet he tells us not how, or in what sense, or upon what terms it is come: He may only mean it is come upon all in respect of the conditional offer and tender of it: So we may understand that of the Apostle, *Tit.* 2. 11. *The Grace of God hath appeared, bringing Salvation to all Men*, for so the Greek exactly runs. The Grace of God hath brought Salvation to all Men in regard of the offer and tender of it, *Preach the Gospel to every Creature*, See the like passage, *Rom.* 3. 22. *The Righteousness of God is revealed to all*: So here the *free Gift is come upon all*, that is in respect of the offer and tender of it. For the Apostle may suppose the condition already performed, and only intend its being come upon all them that believe, according to that of the Apostle before mentioned, *The Righteousness of God is manifest unto all, and upon all them that believe, and there is no difference*: So how the free Gift is come upon all to justification of Life, viz. upon all that believe, and there is no difference. From the whole we may evidently see, this Scripture will not prove what is affirmed, viz. That all Man-

kind, and that universally as born into the World, are freed from the condemnation of the Law, and restored to a state of Favour and Life by Christ: So that as the Covenant of Grace is not entred with all Mankind in general; so there is no other Covenant or Promise recorded, or mentioned in the Scriptures, by vertue of which any one, much less all Mankind, can have the Good assigned to the Infant-seed of Believers granted to, or setled upon them.

Thirdly, Have they it by a mere resultancy from Christ's undertaking and performing the work of Mediation? Sure the grossness of such a supposition renders any reply to it superfluous. It would be a mere loss of time to suppose that which is of it self too absurd to be affirmed by any. To put then a period to this; If the Covenant of Grace be not actually entred with all Mankind, and that as such; If there be no other Covenant or Promise to be found in Scripture, by vertue of which any unconcerned in the Covenant of Grace can lay claim to that Good and those Benefits and Priviledges granted to, and setled upon the Seed of Believers, as Confederates with their Parents; If that Good, and those Benefits come not upon any by a mere resultancy from the Death and Sufferings of Christ, without the intervening of some Covenant or Promise; then there is no ground to affirm, that the Seed of Believers have as under the Covenant signed and sealed by the Sign and Token of it, nothing but what is common to Mankind in general. Only let me add, what will be the case of all Infants born of Unbelieving Parents, and dying in their Infancy, and how God will deal with them in respect of their eternal states, I shall not determine. This is all that I affirm, that as to what God hath re-

vealed in his Word, the Good, Benefits and Priviledges assigned to the Infant-seed of Believers are peculiar and proper unto them, and not common to all Infants in general, they only having an actual Interest in the Covenant of Grace; and consequently as they alone have a right to the Sign and Token of the Covenant, so an unspeakable advantage by that their Covenant-interest, and the Application of the Token thereof unto them, above what all other Infants, as to what the Scripture reveals, have. But let that suffice for the second Benefit or Advantage accrewing to the Infant-seed of Believers by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them upon a precedent Interest they have in the Covenant it self.

CHAP. IX.

The third Benefit accrewing to the Seed of Believers by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them, proposed. A threefold subserviency thereof to their imbracement of the Covenant, as they grow up to years of Maturity, shewed. First, Such Pre-ingagements as would obstruct that their imbracement of the Covenant are obviated and prevented. What Pre-ingagements Children are subject to. The spring of them discovered. How obviated by the Application of the Token, declared. Secondly, Their imbracement of the Covenant by the Application of the

the Token subserved by way of Obligation. The several Obligations that the Seed of Believers are under, as bearing the Token of the Covenant, to imbrace the Covenant, opened. Thirdly, The same end subserved by the Application of the Token of the Covenant by way of Encouragement. What Encouragements the Seed of Believers have to imbrace the Covenant, shewed.

3. THe third and last Benefit or Advantage, that I shall take notice of, that the Seed of Believers have by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them, as antecedently interested in the Covenant it self, is the subserviency thereof to their personal imbracement of the Covenant, and injoyment of all the Good of it, as they grow up to years of Maturity. And here I shall only take notice of a threefold subserviency, that the Application of the Token of the Covenant to Infants (supposing them duely instructed in the end and uses of it) hath to their taking hold of the Covenant, and giving up themselves to God according to the tenour of it as they grow up to years of Maturity.

1. It hath a potent tendency to obviate and prevent all such Pre-ingagements as would be obstructive and prejudicial to their imbracement of the Covenant. And here we may observe, that they are liable to be pre-ingaged three ways.

First, In ways of Idolatry. Secondly, In a pursuance of the good things of the World. Thirdly, In ways of moral Impieties and Debauchries. Now

to be pre-ingaged, especially fixed in any of these ways, must needs be greatly obstructive and prejudicial to their imbracement of the Covenant that God hath established between himself and his People. What ways and courses Men ingage, at least are fixed in from their Child-hood, they are not easily brought to relinquish: *Hath a Nation changed their God?* Jer. 2. 11. That God in whose worship and service Men have been ingaged from their youth, they will not easily change: So to be ingaged and accustomed to atheistical, irreligious and profane ways and courses from their youth, is not a little obstructive and prejudicial to their imbracement of the Covenant: *Can the* Ethiopian *change his skin, or the* Leopard *his spots? then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.* Jer. 13. 23. And the like is true of Childrens being early ingaged in the pursuance of the World, and the things thereof. To shew the various ways, how to be pre-ingaged in any of these ways from a Man's Child-hood, obstructs and opposeth his imbracement of the Covenant and giving up himself to God in Christ in a Covenant-way, is a matter of no great difficulty, but would be somewhat excentrical to my present purpose: But this I say, how obstructive and prejudicial soever such an ingagement, especially fixing in any of these ways from Mens Child-hood, would be to their imbracement of the Covenant; (and ingage they will in one or the other of them, and that early too, unless the free Grace of God blessing the means subserving their taking hold of the Covenant prevent) yet the Application of the Token of the Covenant to Infants hath a potent tendency to prevent any such pre-ingagements they are liable to: For let us but take a brief veiw of the original springs or causes whence

Mens

Mens so early ingaging in one or another of the ways and courses mentioned doth proceed.

1. It proceeds from certain natural and imbred notions of a Deity ingraven upon the minds of all Men; at least from a natural dispositednes of the faculties of the rational Soul to comply with that notion when suggested from without.

2. From a sense and feeling of self-emptines and insufficiency as to that Happines and Blessednes they soon perceive themselves capable of.

3. From the inapprehensivenes and insensiblenes of any cogent obligation to the contrary. Man from his very Childhood is prone to look upon and exalt himself as God, to say of his whole self, as those in the Psalm of their tongues, I am mine own, *who is Lord over me?* And according to various circumstances that Children fall under, so from this threefold spring they ingage in one or another of the ways mentioned. But now the bringing them under the bond of the Covenant, and ingaging them to the true God in Christ by the Application of the Token to them, hath a potent tendency to obviate and prevent their ingaging or fixing in any of these ways. Let us see it in some Instances.

1. The true God is first presented to their minds. Now it's usual for Man, as through the fall become not only dark, but darknes it self, and consequently as having lost the knowledge of the true God, to comply and fall in with, and chuse that God to himself, whether is be true, or any false God that is first presented to his mind, or that is first proposed to him under the notion of a Deity. Hence it is, that the same God is imbraced and worshipped as their God by several Nations successively from one Generation to another: *Hath a Nation changed their God?* It is not often

found that they have. Children usually fall in with and worship that God their Parents have done, and from hence it is, that the true God is owned and worshipped successively from one Generation to another in Nations and Places where the Scriptures are received, and the Christian Doctrine imbraced. They own and worsh p him, not as being convinced that he is indeed the true God by rational demonstrations, much less as being savingly taught and inlightned by himself; but he is that God that is first presented to their minds, and that they first apprehend under the notion of a Deity: and this, though it is true, through the subtilty of Satan, and corruption in the hearts of Men, too often is utterly useless to them in order to their eternal Happiness; yet in it self hath a singular subserviency thereunto, and would be of no small advantage to Men, were it well improved. Yet further, the true God is not only first presented to the minds of the Seed of Believers, but he is presented to their minds as standing in a Covenant-relation towards them, and consequently they find themselves in a Covenant-relation with him (for Covenant-relations are always mutual.) Hence as they find him obliged by Covenant to be theirs: so themselves obliged to be his; which must needs have a potent tendency, as to check any Inquiries that they would otherwise be prone to make after, so to keep them from attending to any proposals that might be made by others of any false god, and also from the choice of any false god by themselves. To have the true God first presented to the mind is of no small advantage to prevent Mens inquiring after, and attending to the proposal of any false god to them; especially considering the suitableness of those discoveries

ries God hath made of himself in his Word (and as revealed therein he is supposed to be presented to their minds) to those notions of a God in the general, that are either found ingraven upon the minds of Men as born into the World, or are taken up by the free use of the rational powers and faculties of the Soul. Now for Children so soon as capable of reflecting upon themselves, and acting rationally with reference to their own future welfare and welbeing, to find an antecedent mutual relation between this God and themselves, wherein he stands related to them as their God, and they stand related to him as his People, Subjects and Servants, will add greatly to the more effectual prevention of their ingaging in any ways of Idolatry they (as Youth is) are prone to comply and fall in with that God that is first presented to the mind, or that the mind hath the first notice of: so the notion under which the true God is presented to their minds suiting so well with those antecedent notions they have of a God in the general, will greatly conduce to their compliance and falling in with him and his worship and service: But when they find a mutual relation already established between him and them, that will yet further their compliance; and consequently their inquiries after, or attendance to what may be proposed or offered to them concerning any other God, will be obviated and prevented. And though this may seem of small importance to Children born in Places and Nations where the true God is only owned worshipped and served, there being no danger of their first ingaging in any ways of Idolatry in such Places and Nations: yet we must remember, that God in the establishment of his Covenant had respect to his People and their Seed, not only as inhabiting

biting ſuch Places and Nations, but as inhabiting Places and Nations where falſe gods are owned, worſhipped and ſerved. 2. God's being under an obligation to communicate himſelf to, and act for their good according to the tenour of the Covenant, will give them aſſurance of a fulneſs of Bleſſedneſs and Happineſs in their alone cleaving to, worſhipping and ſerving him; whence they may be eaſily convinced of the unneceſſarineſs of either applying themſelves to the worſhip of any falſe god, or to the World, or any ways of ſenſuality for the gaining that Happineſs they find themſelves capable of, but inſufficient unto as of themſelves. Man, ſo ſoon as capable of reflecting upon himſelf, or taking any account of his own caſe and condition, finds himſelf utterly deſtitute of a ſelf-ſufficiency, ſees himſelf capable of more good than he is furniſhed with, and ſubject to variety of evils, which of himſelf without ſome extrinſecal aid he cannot ſecure himſelf from, nor deliver himſelf out of: hence he is forced to look without, and caſt about him to find out which way, or from whence he may be ſupplyed with that good he finds himſelf defective in, and delivered out of, or ſecured from that evil he finds himſelf under or ſubject to: and according to various circumſtances that Men are under, ſo they betake themſelves to, and ingage in various ways and courſes, yet with reference to the ſame general end, *viz.* the gaining of Happineſs and Bleſſedneſs. Now Children, if left to the mere conduct of nature as now corrupted, will certainly and unavoidably betake themſelves to one or other of the aforementioned ways, which muſt needs be greatly obſtructive and prejudicial to their imbracement of the Covenant of Grace. But now for the Seed of Believers to find God under ſuch a precedent

cedent obligation to communicate himself to, and act for their good, as he hath put himself under towards them, must needs have a powerful tendency to obviate and prevent their ingaging in any such way; because they will find their Happiness & Blessedness fully secured by that obligation, supposing them not to reject, but actually to own the Covenant established with them.

3. The Covenant under the bond of which they already are, strongly obligeth them against applying themselves to, or ingaging in any of the ways mentioned; But of this more hereafter. So that we may see how great a tendency the Application of the Token of the Covenant to the Infant-seed of Believers, upon a precedent Interest they have in the Covenant it self, hath to the obviating and preventing their ingaging or fixing in any ways obstructive and prejudicial to their imbracing of the Covenant as they grow up to years of Maturity; those ways they are naturally prone to ingage in (their ingagement in which would oppose their imbracing of the Covenant) are hedged up. When God hedgeth up the way of his People after their Lovers, then they resolve upon returning to and seeking him, *Hos.*2.6,7. So for Children to have their ingaging in any destructive ways obviated and prevented, highly conduceth to their taking hold of the Covenant, and applying themselves to the worship and service of God.

II. The Covenant-relation, wherein the Seed of Believers stands Godwards, as solemnized, ratified and confirmed by the Application of the Token, subserves their personal imbracement, and taking hold of the Covenant, and answerably giving up themselves to God in Christ according to the tenour of it by way of obligation; they hereby become under the strongest

obligation

obligation to do it; and we may observe a fourfold obligation that they are under, beyond what the Children of others are.

1. First, There is all that Love, Grace and Goodness of God expreſt in the extending the Covenant with the Sign and Token thereof unto them, and granting them all the Good aforementioned, as an obligation upon them. As this Grace, Love, and Goodness of God is a powerful ingagement to Parents to endeavour the converſion of their Children, and bring them to a perſonal imbracement of the Covenant; ſo it is alike powerful ingagement to Children themſelves to imbrace it, and give up themſelves to the worſhip and ſervice of God according to the tenour of it. How great Grace, Love and Goodneſs God hath expreſt to the Seed of Believers in his extending his Covenant unto them with the Token thereof, hath been already declared. Now when they become capable of underſtanding, and reflecting upon that Love, Grace and Goodneſs, the apprehenſion and conſideration of it hath a potent tendency to excite their love to, and ingage them to take this God for their God, and to worſhip and ſerve him. Love hath a conſtraining power, and Children are capable of receiving early impreſſions from their apprehenſions of what Grace and Love is expreſt towards them as well as grown perſons.

2. There is their Parents acceptation of the Covenant for them, and their entring them into it, and giving them up to God according to the tenour of it, as another obligation upon them. Parents acts on the behalf of, or with reference to their Children, are an obligation upon them to comply with, and ſtand to what is done by their Parents on their behalf, and with reference

reference to them. Hence *Samuel* complyes with *Hannah's* vow, and gives himself freely to serve the Lord in his Tabernacle, according to the dedication she had made of him. Yea *Jephtah's* daughter complies with her Father's vow, though (as most think) it was to be offered up in Sacrifice: *My Father (saith she) if thou hast opened thy mouth to the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth.* Judg. 11. 36. As Parents have a power to dispose of their Children in a subordination unto God; so Children are obliged to comply with that disposal they make of them. And as the confidence Nature it self teacheth them to have in their Parents as to their prudence, love, &c. so their duty towards them obligeth them so to do. Hence their Parents having accepted of the Covenant for them, and answerably entred them into it, they are under a powerful obligation to comply with what their Parents have done, and answerably personally imbrace the Covenant, and give up themselves to God in Christ to worship and serve him.

3. There is the Token of the Covenant as applyed to, and born by them, as a further obligation upon them. One use and end of the Token of the Covenant, whether Circumcision or Baptism, according to divine Institution, was, and is to oblige and incage the Persons to whom it was and is applied to cleave and adhere to God in Christ, his worship and service. The Token of the Covenant is equivalent to Presmony given to Souldiers: God by it obligeth his People to himself, and to serve under Christ the Captain of their Salvation. From this use or end of the Token or Seals of the Covenant, they seem to have received their denomination of Sacraments; which word is conceived to be borrowed from the ancient

Romans,

Romans, among whom it was used to signifie the oath by which, together with certain rights and a prescript form of words, Souldiers did ingage themselves, or were ingaged to do whatsoever the Emperour or General should command, and not forsake their Colours till the Ware were ended. *Tertullian* is supposed to be the first that brought the word into the Church, and applied it to a spiritual use. But however the Word is not improper nor unfit, it fully expressing this end and use of the Tokens of the Covenant, they were, and are for the ingaging men to God in Christ. God by them ingageth and ties his People to himself. Now the Seed of Believers when they come to years of Maturity finding themselves under this bond, and that as put upon them by Divine Institution, must needs be more strongly obliged to take God in Christ as their God, and give up themselves to him, to be his, to worship and serve him according to the tenour of the Covenant. God's having pressed them (as I may so speak) into his own service, and obliged them to himself by such a solemn right, is a strong obligation upon them to serve him, and give themselves to him. Hence we read of the Martyr, who to all his temptations to deny Christ makes no reply but this, *Baptizatus sum.*

Here is the great aggravation that their sin in rejecting the Covenant they had, as the Seed of such Parents, admission into, and forsaking God and his ways, above what the sin of others in neglecting to take hold of the Covenant doth admit of; and consequently the greatness of their condemnation above the condemnation of others if they should do so, as a further obligation upon them to imbrace the Covenant, and walk in the ways of God they are more obliged

obliged to. Their sin in rejecting the Covenant into which they were taken admits of variety of aggravations, beyond what the sin of others in not taking hold of the Covenant admits of, which they being made sensible and apprehensive of, hath a potent tendency strongly to oblige them to imbrace it. But of this I may touch more again hereafter. But

3. And lastly, The interest that the Seed of Believers have in the Covenant as ratified, sealed and confirmed to them by the Application of the Token, highly subserves their personal imbracement of it by way of incouragement; they have peculiar incouragements thereunto beyond what others have. To instance in some few of them.

1. First, They find themselves already in a state of peace with God. Their work is not so much to gain, or make peace with God, as to maintain it. Their peace is already made by being received into the Covenant of Grace, the Law hath nothing to charge upon them to their condemnation, they are not under the Law but under Grace; they are discharged from the condemning power of whatever guilt might hitherto be charged upon them. And how great an incouragement must that needs be to them to close in with Christ? what ground of hope have they that God will accept of them and grant them his Spirit for their Renovation and Sanctification? Is none of the least discouragement to Adult sinners to come unto Christ, that they by under so much guilt as they are conscious to themselves of? were they assured their guilt were removed, that God were not obliged to deal with them as enemies, what incouragements and sober hopes would they have, that God might give them his Spirit for their Regenera-

tion

tion and Sanctification. Now that discouragement is removed out of the way of the Seed of Believers, finding themselves already in a state of peace with God; how can they then rationally entertain any jealousies about his readiness to do them good, and continue them in that state?

2. There is the mutual Love and Friendship that hath been between God and their Parents as a further incouragement to them. The special Love and Favour that God bears to their Parents, is a choise incouragement to Children, that, accepting of the Covenant, and giving up themselves to God in Christ according to the tenour of it, they shall not be rejected, but readily accepted by him. As God hath granted and actually vouchsafed many choice Mercies and Favours to Children for their Parents sake: so Children have improved the consideration of their relation to such Parents as a help to their Faith and Hope in their seeking unto God for Mercy. Thus, though *Ishmael* by his persecuting of *Isaac* had forfeited his interest in the Covenant, and was cast out both of *Abraham*'s Family and the Covenant; yet God promised to make him a Nation, because he was *Abraham*'s Seed, *Gen.* 21. 13. So we find God for the sake both of *Abraham* and *David* shewing Mercy to their respective Posterity, though guilty of great provocations against him, *Psalm.* 105. 42. *Isa.* 37. 35. Hence are such Petitions in Scripture, *Oh turn unto me, and have Mercy upon me, give thy strength to thy Servant, and save the Son of thy Handmaid*, Psal. 86. 16. As the consideration of his own relation to God as his Servant, so the consideration of his descent from her that was his Handmaid, was a great incouragement to him, and a great advantage to his Faith

and

and Hope in petitioning for Mercy. For Children to conſider their relation to ſuch Parents, between God and whom there hath been or is a mutual ſpecial Love and Friendſhip, is a ſingular incouragement to them in taking hold of the Covenant, and applying themſelves to God for the Mercies and Bleſſings of it. The Love that God bears to believing Parents is a very great ingagement to him to a ready doing Good to their Children.

3. There is all that God hath already done for them as the Seed of ſuch Parents ſignally expreſſive and ſignificative of his ſpecial good will towards them, as a further incouragement to them God's extending his Covenant to them, and thereby freeing them from the condemning power of Original ſin, giving them an intereſt in himſelf, and a right to future Salvation, and thereby ſecuring their Salvation in caſe of their death in Infancy, are glorious ſignifications of his ſpecial good will unto them, and willingneſs that they in particular ſhould be ſaved, and conſequently may be improved as choice incouragements to them to take hold of the Covenant: They have not the leaſt ground to ſuſpect God's readineſs to receive them, and proceed on in his goodneſs and kindneſs to them, ſeeing he hath ſecured their Salvation by his Covenant and Promiſe, while they were uncapable of performing the conditions of it in their own Perſons, be ſure he will not reject them, or refuſe to continue his Grace to them, in order to their future Salvation, when they are willing to accept of and perform the conditions of the Covenant themſelves. *Paul* ſtrengtheneth his Faith and Hope as to God's *delivering him from every evil work, and preſerving him to his Heavenly Kingdom* by the conſide-

ration of what he had done for him in delivering him from that great Tyrant *Nero*, 2 Tim. 4. 16, 17, 18. And surely much more may the Seed of Believers incourage themselves and strengthen their Faith and Hope as to God's acceptation of them, and giving them Grace and Glory, themselves being now willing to accept of and perform the conditions of the Covenant by the consideration of what he hath already done for them.

4. They may, if not positively assure themselves, yet comfortably hope that they are yet actually under the Promises of God's being a God to them, and giving them future Salvation; And how great an incouragement must that needs be to them? They have the faithfulness of God ingaged to make good his Promises, unless they by their wilful rejection of Christ and the Terms of the Covenant forfeit their own Interest in them.

Obj. But it may be said, Though hitherto they have been actually under the Promises, and consequently might have incouraged themselves by the consideration of the faithfulness of God: but now they can no longer lay claim to the Promises, but upon supposition of their own performance of the conditions of the Covenant.

Answ. It is true, but yet let this be considered, That God in the Promise speaks more determinately, expressly and particularly to them, than he doth to others. The language of God to each one of them is this, I am thy God, only do not now reject my Covenant, and the relation between me and thee shall be continued. To others he speaks more generally and indefinitely, *He that believes shall be saved. Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.*

Who-

Whosoever will, let him come and take of the Water of Life. Now, though it is true, these general and indefinite Promises and Invitations are sufficient incouragements to all to come unto and close in with Christ, and cast themselves upon him for Pardon, Life and Salvation; yet we find by experience, poor awakened sinners are hardly perswaded that themselves are in particular intended in those more general and indefinite Promises and Calls. Were they assured themselves were intended, it would be a mighty incouragement to them; but that they are hardly brought to believe. The more we can appropriate any Promises to our selves in particular, the greater efficacy they will have upon our hearts for our incouragement. It is a mighty incouragement to the Jaylor, when the Apostle shall speak particularly to him, and assure him *if he should believe, he should be saved and all his house.* Now God speaks particularly and determinately to the Seed of Believers, and not only offers to be a God to them, but assures them he is so already, only requires their personal performance of the conditions of the Covenant, in order to the continuance of that Relation between himself and them, and that they may have the actual injoyment of that Salvation, they are, as the Seed of such Parents, the Heirs of. And if it should be said, that they may have forfeited their Covenant-state and Relation already by their not sooner actually and explicitly recognizing the Covenant, and giving up themselvs to God in Christ according to the tenour of it; and fears of that will render this consideration of little use to them. That Objection shall be answered by and by.

Obj. If it be yet said, That what incouragements soever they have to believe and take hold of the Co-

venant, yet they will ſoon find by experience their own inability to do it, they will find they cannot do it without the ſpecial Teachings and Operations of the Spirit; and what incouragement have they to hope for theſe Teachings and Operations beyond what others have? To that I add in a fifth incouragement that they have above others, and that is this: They ſtand nearer than the reſt of Mankind to, and are the more eſpecial Objects of the Promiſes of ſaving Grace. This I have ſpoken ſo largely to already, that I need add no more. But beſides, all thoſe other incouragements they have to believe may be improved as a help to their hope for Grace to inable them thereunto. Surely then finding themſelves in a ſtate of Peace with God, remembring what a mutual Friendſhip and Love there hath been between God and their Parents, conſidering what he hath already done for them as a ſignal ſignification of his good will towards them, and having a particular Promiſe to aſſure them in particular, that as God at preſent is, ſo he will continue to be a God to them, unleſs by their voluntary rejecting the Covenant they diſanul that their Intereſt; may not only be choice incouragements to them to believe and take hold of the Covenant, but to hope that God will readily vouchſafe them the Teachings and effectual Operations of his Spirit to inable them ſo to do, they waiting upon him in his own way. But to put a cloſe to this ſecond Queſtion. We now ſee how great Good, what glorious Benefits and Advantages the Seed of Believers have by the Application of the Token of the Covenant to them; and from all we may conclude, that Infant-Baptiſm is a practice well worthy enquiring into, and contending for by all Parents that have any reſpect to the ſpiritual and eternal welfare of their Children. CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The third grand Question proposed. The duty of Parents towards their Children reduced to two Heads. Their duty to be performed immediately and directly towards them again reduced to two Heads. What they are to teach and instruct them in and about: As also what means they are to use for the rendring. Instructions given them, opened. Some rules for their right management of them in the performance of their duty, laid down. Their duty to be performed immediately towards God on the behalf of their Children, shewed. Some Motives to press them to a faithful performance of their duty, urged.

Quest. 3. WHat is the duty of Parents towards their Children, as under the bond of the Covenant and bearing the Token of it?

Answ. This and the next Question being frequently and largely treated of by others, I shall speak the more sparingly to them. For this Question then, the duty of Parents is considerable two ways.

1. First, As to be performed immediately and directly towards their Children.

2. Secondly, As to be performed more immediately towards God, but with reference to, and on the

behalf of their Children, they are to deal with their Children in the Name, and on the behalf of God, and to deal with God, with reference to, and on the behalf of their Children.

First, For their duty immediately and directly respecting their Children, the Apostle summarily comprehends it under these two terms, *Nurture and Admonition*, and both must be *of the Lord*, Eph. 6. 3. *And ye Fathers provoke not your Children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* Though the Apostle here speaks expresly only unto Fathers, yet Mothers are not exempted, but included: As they are alike interested in their Children with their Husbands; so they are to joyn with them in the holy education of them; and says the Apostle, *bring up your Children in* or with *the nurture and admonition of the Lord*; as if the Apostle should say, to your feeding, cloathing and providing necessaries for their bodies, and a comfortable subsistance in this life, add the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Here I shall do two things. 1. Briefly open their duty. 2. Add some Rules for a more successful performance of it.

1. For the first, under these two terms, we are to comprehend two things in the general.

1. First, Instruction,

2. Secondly, The Use and Application of all due and apt means subserving or conducing to their imbracing, acting and practising according to instructions given them: * so that the duty of Parents toward

* *Hortatur ut eos educent cum institutione & commonefactione Domini, hoc est, ut eos instituant, & erudiant in Doctrinâ Christianâ, & subinde piis commonefactionibus ad officia pietatis forment.* Pisca. *in loco.*

wards their Children conſiſts in two things in the general.

Firſt, In teaching and inſtructing them. And though they are to teach and inſtruct them in their whole duty both towards God and Man; yet I ſhall only inſtance in five things, wherein they are in a peculiar manner to inſtruct them.

1. Firſt, They are to teach and inſtruct them in the knowledge of God, acquaint them with the Being of God, endeavour to convince them that there is a ſupreme Being whom we call God, who is the Creator and Governour of all things, from whom themſelves have originally received their Beings, whoſe they are, and upon whom they depend, whom they muſt worſhip, and who will judge them at the laſt day, and then reward them according as they have obeyed or diſobeyed his Commands. And as they are to inſtruct them in the Being of a God; ſo to acquaint them with the manner of his Subſiſtence and Nature, as revealed by his Names, Titles and Properties, as they are able to bear it. And we find Children ſoon comply with the notions of a Deity, and not altogether unreadily entertain eſpecially ſuch notions of and about his Nature, as are diſcoverable by, and agreeable to the light and dictates of Nature. Some have obſerved, that all Religion is ingrafted upon the ſtock of Nature; God hath left ſomewhat of thoſe Original Principles of Religion implanted in the Nature of Man at his firſt Creation, which facilitates the reception of the firſt fundamental Principles upon which all Religion is built; as a brand ſooner inkindles than the green wood that hath never been in the fire. Hence Parents are to begin with the revival of ſuch Principles and Notions as are not

utterly obliterated and blotted out of the Nature of Man, and such are these concerning the Being of God, his Nature and Relations towards Man as his Creator and Governour, *&c.* Let but these Principles and Notions be throughly revived, and more fully fixed and riveted in the minds and Consciences of Children; it will greatly facilitate their reception of all higher Truths and Doctrines revealed in the Scriptures.

2. They are to teach and instruct them in the way of God's dealing with Man as his Creature, that it always hath been and still is according to some Covenant, wherein he promises somewhat of Good unto Men upon condition of their performing that duty himself hath prescribed and injoyned; having always annexed rewards and punishments to the performance or non-performance of that duty. For Parents to instruct their Children and make them apprehensive and sensible that this always hath been, and still is the way of God's dealing with Men, will greatly conduce to their more ready entertainment of what shall be shewed them concerning the several Covenants God hath made with Men, and their states, conditions and duties as interested in the one or the other Covenant that God hath made with Man.

3. They are to teach and instruct them in and about the Covenant of Nature, or the Law of Works established with Man at his first Creation; and here they are to instruct them, in that happy estate Man was in as under that Covenant, how happy he should have been had he performed the conditions of it; what penalty was annexed to the transgression of that Law; how that Covenant was broken by *Adam* the first Parent of Mankind; how far all his posterity are

concerned

concerned in that breach; what the penalty is that all Mankind as born into the World are under, and farther ſubject to, as involved in that breach; how the guilt of *Adam*'s ſin redounds to them; how their Natures are corruped and depraved; how that corruption and depravation of their Natures flows from that firſt breach of that Covenant; how they are Children of Wrath, as under that guilt, and as having their Natures ſo vitiated and depraved.

4. They are to inſtruct them, in and about the Covenant of Grace, as eſtabliſhed in the Sacrifice, Death and Sufferings of a Mediator; and here they are to inſtruct them, in the Perſon, Offices and Works of this Mediator; what are the terms and conditions of this Covenant; how far themſelves are intereſted in it, as the Seed of believing Parents; what Good they have already granted to them by it; upon what terms that Good was granted, and hath been hitherto continued to them; what is now required of them to the preſervation of their Covenant-ſtate.

5. They are to teach and inſtruct them in the uſes and ends of their Baptiſm; * what is ſignified by it; how the Covenant they are received into, is ſealed and confirmed by it; what aſſurance they have thereby of injoying all the Good, Benefits and Bleſſings promiſed, unleſs they forfeit them by the non-performance of that duty God requires on their parts; what incouragements they have to perform that duty; what obligations ly upon them to take hold of the Covenant, and give up themſelves to God; what their ſin and miſery will be in caſe they do it not; how happy

* *Doctrinam Baptiſmi teneant Baptizati.* Hild.

happy they ſhall be in caſe they do it. Thus the Lord commands the People of *Iſrael* to inſtruct their Children in the uſe and ends of the Paſſover, and the ſame they were doubtleſs to do in reſpect of Circumciſion, and other Sacramental ſigns in uſe among them, *Exod.* 12. 26, 27. *And it ſhall come to paſs, when your Children ſay unto you, What mean ye by this ſervice? then ye ſhall ſay, It is the Sacrifice of the Lord's Paſſover, who paſſed over the houſes of the Children of Iſrael, when he ſmote the Egyptians, and delivered our houſes.* And here we may obſerve the uſefulneſs of bringing Children to the adminiſtration of Baptiſm: to others it may occaſion their enquiry after the meaning of that Ordinance; but however, whether they enquire or no, it is the duty of Parents to let them behold the adminiſtration of it, and thereupon take occaſion to inſtruct them in the uſes and ends of it. But

2. For the Uſe and Application of all due and apt means conducing to their imbracing, acting and practiſing according to theſe inſtructions given them. And thus

1. They are to keep them, as much as may be, from any notice or knowledge of any Objects, Principles, or Doctrines, as alſo from any ſuch notions, or apprehenſions of, and about earthly things, as by means whereof, they may be obſtructed and prejudiced in their cloſing in with God in Chriſt, imbracing the Covenant, and giving themſelves up to God according to the terms of it.

Preſerve their minds and affections, as much as may be, from anticipations or pre-ingagements, by means of which their imbracing, acting and practiſing according to what they are taught, would be prejudiced.

Thus

Thus, suppose Believers to have their lot cast in places where some false God is worshipped, their duty would be, to keep their Children from any notice of such a God: so where corrupt Principles and Doctrines, whether relating to worship or manners, are preached or maintained, it is the duty of Parents, what in them lyes, to keep their Children from any knowledge of them, lest their minds and judgments should be infected with them; So to keep them from the sight of such things as have a tendency to vitiate their minds, and excite the corruptions of their hearts. For this reason *Aristotle* tells us a Law-giver ὅλως ἐκ τῆς πόλεως αἰσχρολογίαν ἐξορίζειν δεῖ, *viz.* lest the minds of youth should be vitiated, and they should first learn to speak filthily, and then to act filthily. So again, to keep them from any such notions or apprehensions of, and about earthly things, as tend to ingage their affections to them. Parents are not a little prejudicial to their Children, to applaud their bravery, on the account of fine clothes and the like: so by insinuating the worth and excellency of Mony, Estates, Honours and the like; they should rather endeavour to convince them of the nothingness, insignificancy and vanity of these things. When Childrens minds are prepossessed with notions and apprehensions of a worth and excellency in such things, their desires run out after them, and they begin to promise to themselves a kind of felicity in them; whence they soon ingage in a pursuance of them, to the neglect of Christ, and that inheritance above they are born Heirs unto.

2. Frequent repetitions and inculcations of the same things greatly conduce to the ends mentioned: Children, as they receive but little at a time, so they need

need frequent repetitions and inculcations of the ſame things; their underſtandings are weak, their memories ſlippery, and what impreſſions may be made upon their hearts and affections, ſoon wear off again: hence the ſame things muſt be often repeated and inculcated upon them. Indeed repetitions and inculcations of the ſame things are uſeful to the Adult: *To write the ſame things to you*, ſaith the Apoſtle to the *Philippians*, *to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is ſafe*, Phil. 3. 1. Men it is true are delighted in variety, and in the newneſs of things propoſed, but ſaith the Apoſtle, *to write the ſame things is ſafe for you*: yet the ſame things may be written, or ſpoken in variety of phraſes and different expreſſions, and ſo to do, is uſeful to prevent tediouſneſs, and loathing; but to have the ſame things frequently repeated and inculcated, if not in the ſame, yet in different phraſes and expreſſions, is exceeding ſafe for grown Chriſtians, and much more for Children; yea to repeat the ſame things, in the ſame words and expreſſions, ſuppoſing prudence be uſed, is uſeful for them. The Lord, ſpeaking of the Commandments, Statutes and Judgments he had given his ancient People, gives them this charge about them, that *they ſhould teach them diligently to their Children*, Deut. 6. 7. and what he means by teaching them diligently, he explains in the following words, *thou ſhalt talk of them* (viz. to thy Children) *when thou ſitteſt in thy houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way, when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up*; as much as to ſay, thou ſhalt be frequently talking of, and inculcating them upon thy Children. The capacities of Children require a frequent repetition and inculcation of the ſame things, as in reſpect of their natural food: As they can receive

ceive and digeſt but a little at a time, ſo they muſt be frequently fed: So in reſpect of inſtructions, which are the food of their ſouls, they muſt be frequently inſtructed in the ſame things.

3. The intermingling Exhortations, Perſwaſions, Intreaties, Commands, *&c.* with Inſtructions, tends greatly to render thoſe Inſtructions more effectual; it is not enough to inlighten the underſtanding, and inform the judgment, but the affections and paſſions muſt be wrought upon, and excited. We find the working upon, and exciting of the affections and paſſions in grown perſons is highly ſerviceable to their converſion, imbracement of, and ſtedfaſtneſs in the ways of God; and much more muſt it be ſo in Children. Now the affections and paſſions are wrought upon by the means now mentioned. Theſe Exhortations, Perſwaſions, Commands, *&c.* are conceived to be included in this word νουθεσία, we tranſlate admonition; Parents are to bring up up their Children in the admonition as well as nurture of the Lord: ſo ſaith God of *Abraham*, *I know* Abraham *that he will command his Children and his Houſehold*; and what the iſſue of that ſhall be he tells us, *they ſhall keep the way of the Lord*, Gen. 18. 19. of which more by and by. Such Perſwaſions and Exhortations, Intreaties and Commands are expreſſive of the affections of Parents towards, as well as their authority over their Children; and the more Children are ſenſible of their Parents affection towards, and authority over them, the greater efficacy will their Inſtructions have upon their hearts. Their Parents are preſent with them, and viſible to them; God is out of their ſight, their apprehenſions of him can be ſuppoſed to be but low, and confuſed; they live by ſence,

ſence, and not by Faith. Hence an affectionate Exhortation, or Intreaty from their Parents, may, and poſſibly will do more with them, than the bare Commands of God; however ſuch Exhortations and Commands, &c. from their Parents added to the Exhortations and Commands from God in his Word, muſt needs rationally be more effectual. There is their Parents affection anſwered by a natural ſtorge and filial affection towards them, and Paternal authority anſwered by a natural kind of inſtinct, or inclination to obey, ſuperadded to the efficacy of thoſe dawnings of Light, let into their underſtandings by Inſtructions given them, and of thoſe morning apprehenſions they have of God, more effectually to induce and ingage them to act and practiſe accordingly. Hence this intermixture of Exhortations, Perſwaſions, Intreaties and Commands muſt needs greatly further their converſion and imbracement of the Covenant.

4. Good Examples are great furtherances to Childrens falling in with, and imbracement of the ways of God; and indeed neither inſtructions, nor the uſe of any other means can be rationally expected to be ſucceſsful, without this example conduce to the rendring Inſtructions effectual two ways.

1. They reallize to Childrens apprehenſions the things they are inſtructed in, and about: for Parents to ſpeak of a God infinitely holy, and a perfect hater of ſin; to ſpeak of God infinitely juſt, and a ſevere avenger of ſin, &c. and yet not expreſs any fear towards him themſelves, nor take heed of what is ſinful, will ſignify little; Children will quickly apprehend the inconſiſtency between what is ſpoken of, or concerning God, and their Parents ways and actions. Now how can Parents expect their Children

ſhould

should believe, what their own ways and actions declare themselves believe not?

2. Examples induce and provoke to Imitation, *Exempla magis movent quàm documenta*, is peculiarly true, as applyed to Children; we see how prone they are to Imitation, their manners are much formed by example; * hence good examples not only from Parents, but others highly further their falling in with, and imbracing of the ways of God.

* Aristotle *would have youth kept even from the sight of all Pictures of any Limner, excepting of such an one who* τῶν ἀγαλματοποιῶν ἐστὶν ἡ θεὸς, *represents the honest manners of worthy Men.*

5. To put Children upon and inure them to holy exercises, will greatly further the ends aimed at: hence Parents should put their Children upon the practice of what they have taught them, thus they are to cause them to joyn in holy duties both publick and private.

It is prejudicial to Children to be excluded from Family duties, at least when they are capable to joyn in them, without causing distractions; and let me say for Parents to plead Children will be troublesome, when the fault is in themselves, in not bringing of them under their command, will be but a bad excuse at the last.

So again, Parents should inure them to holy exercises themselves, as Reading and Praying, and direct them in a right performance of that duty: we find both our Lord Christ, and *John Baptist* instructed their Disciples in the performance of that duty, and probably betimes, *Luk.* 11. 1. Let them know that all Good must come from God, and put them upon the

the ſeeking for it from him; let them know their continuance in a Covenant-ſtate depends upon their performance of the conditions themſelves, but let them know withall that it is God muſt give what himſelf requires.

6. The adding of due Correction as the caſe may require, will yet promote the ſame ends; the Rod is the Child's ordinance, hence ſo frequently recommended by *Solomon*. Though correction conveys not Grace to, nor can it work Grace in the ſoul, yet it highly ſubſerves their gaining of Grace.

2. But ſecondly, Let me juſt touch upon ſome few Rules, that may be of uſe unto Parents in their right and ſucceſsful performance of their duty towards their Children.

1. By grave and ſerious dealing with them about the concerns of God and their ſouls, with a gravity and ſerioufneſs becoming matters of ſuch an importance. It is ſaid of a Biſhop, he muſt be one who *ruleth well his own houſe, having his Children in ſubjection with all gravity*, 1 Tim. 3. 4. the ſame is the duty of all Chriſtian Parents, though eminently required in the Miniſters of the Goſpel. Some deal with their Children in ſoul-affairs, as though they were rather in jeſt than earneſt; and no wonder though Children are neither ſerious, nor in good earneſt in attending to, or practiſing ſuch inſtructions: Parents ſhould labour to carry it ſo in all their words and actions, as that their Children may perceive the weight and importance of the things they deal with them about.

Inſtructing and chaſtiſing Children requires the utmoſt gravity and ſeriouſneſs.

2. Shew

2. Shew as much love to God, as also as much affection towards your Children, but as little of self and passion as possibly you can: the more Children are apprehensive of these things (and quickly apprehensive they will be) the more weight will instructions have upon their hearts; the less of God, and the more of self appears in any Instructions, Counsels, Perswasions or Commands, the less will they be attended to, and regarded, *sic vice versâ*.

3. Exercise Wisdom and Prudence. Wisdom and Prudence is required hardly in any thing, if in any thing at all, more than in the education and bringing up of Children; yet I shall not attempt to give any Rules in this case, neither is it in the power of any man to give such Rules and Directions, as may sufficiently furnish all Parents with that Wisdom and Prudence necessary to the right managing of themselves in the discharge of their duty towards their Children; they must have it from God, or after all, they will be greatly defective therein. I shall only intimate some Cases wherein special Wisdom is required.

1. In beginning with such Instructions as those principles connatural to them will subserve their imbracement of, to kindle the brand, if I may so speak, where it hath the greatest disposition to take fire.

2. Again, Wisdom is required in so repeating and inculcating Instructions, as that they may be most useful for the inlightning their minds, and working upon their affections; and yet may not beget tediousness or slightness of spirit.

3. Again, much Wisdom is required in intermingling such instructions; and so administring them, as may keep up their love to, and delight in Religion,

with ſuch inſtructions as may keep up a holy awe and fear in their hearts Godward.

4. Again, Wiſdom is required in keeping up their incouragements, and yet preventing their preſumption and formality.

5. Once again, much Wiſdom is required in dealing with Children according to their different tempers and conſtitutions; ſome are more eaſily wrought upon by love, others by fear; ſome by gentle, others by more ſevere means; ſome need more of the rod, others leſs; and variety of the like inſtances might be given. This is certain, the ſucceſs of Parents diſcharge of their duty towards their Children, very much depends upon the Wiſdom they are indued with, and do exerciſe therein.

4. Begin with your Children betimes, *Chaſten thy Child betimes*, ſaith *Solomon*; ſo inſtruct him betimes. Parents ſhould endeavour (were it poſſible) to anticipate Satan, and put a check to the very firſt buddings forth of corruption, *Quò ſemel eſt imbuta recens*, &c. 'Tis the folly of moſt Parents to leave themſelves only an after-game to play; they ſow not till the thorns have got ſuch rooting, as that they check the ſeed ſowen; their Childrens minds are ſo vitiated, that their inſtructions meet with ſtronger oppoſition than otherwiſe they would do: therefore begin with them betimes, *In the morning ſow thy ſeed.* 'Tis applicable to our preſent purpoſe, Children have ears to hear before they have tongues to ſpeak. That may be received by the ear and eye which the tongue cannot expreſs; hence Parents ſhould not forbear inſtructions till their Children are capable of returning anſwers. But

2. The

2. The duty of Parents more immediately reſpects God, yet to be performed on the behalf of their Children, and thus their great duty is Prayer; and two things in the general they are to pray for:

1. The beſtowment of ſuch endowments upon themſelves, as may capacifie them for the due performance of their duty towards their Children. And of all gifts and endowments they ought to be peculiarly importunate for Wiſdom and Prudence. He that gives wiſdom to the Husband-man for the *caſting in the Fetches and ſcattering the Cummin*, &c. *when he hath plowed his ground and made plain the face thereof*, muſt teach Parents wiſdom to manage their duty aright towards their Children. Lower abilities managed with wiſdom prove more effectual than greater without it. What encouragement Parents have to be importunate for this gift the Apoſtle *James* ſhews us, Jam. 1. 5.

2. They are to pray for a bleſſing upon the performance of their duty towards their Children, with the concurrence of the Spirit to make all means uſed effectual. Prayer and Inſtruction; yea Prayer and Correction ought to go together. The moſt faithful, diligent and wiſe diſcharge of duty will leave Children graceleſs, unleſs God add his bleſſing. Now though a Covenant-ſtate be hereditary, yet Grace is not ſo, that's from God, given to whom he pleaſeth in a compliance with his eternal Purpoſe and Decrees. But theſe being ſecret, hid in the breaſt of God, are not to be Parents rule in the performance of their duty, they are to perform it equally and alike unto all. Let me add, the more Faith there is in Prayer, the more prevalent it will be; and how far Faith may be acted with reference to Children, may

be gathered from what hath been already ſaid. Among other things they may believe, that the promiſes of the firſt Grace do appertain to them indefinitely, as members of that Collective Body to which thoſe Promiſes are made. And hence, though they cannot poſitively believe that theſe Promiſes ſhall be made good to every one of their Children, yet they may and ought to believe the truth and faithfulneſs of God, and anſwerably act a dependance upon him, with a comfortable hope that the Good promiſed ſhall be given to each one of their Children. I ſhall only add two or three Motives to preſs Parents to a faithful diſcharge of their duty, and ſo paſs from this third Queſtion.

1. Conſider the manifold obligations lying upon you to be faithful, conſciencious, and diligent therein; and to paſs by all others, an account of which I have already given, let me only remind you of, and a little preſs upon you that reference and ſubſerviency that your diſcharge of your duty hath to your Childrens imbracement of the Covenant, and conſequently to God's bringing upon you in vouchſafing unto them the Good promiſed. That paſſage of God's concerning *Abraham* cannot well be too often inculcated upon believing Parents, *Gen.* 18. 19. There are two things peculiarly remarkable in this Scripture.

1. To mention that in the firſt place which is ſet down in the latter part of the Verſe, the ſubſerviency of Parents faithful performance of their duty to God's bringing upon them the Good promiſed, *viz.* with reference to their Children, *That the Lord may bring upon him what he hath ſpoken of him*; as if God could not (keeping exactly to the terms of the Covenant) vouchſafe the Good promiſed to Children, unleſs that

Parents

Parents be faithful in the performance of their duty towards them. It ſeems at leaſt very probable to infer an abſolute neceſſity of Parents performance of their duty in order to God's giving them the Good promiſed in purſuance of the Promiſe made to them on the behalf of their Children; however this muſt be ſaid, that Childrens forfeiture of their Covenant-ſtate, and all the Good annexed thereunto, is greatly hazarded by Parents failing therein. It's true, God may extend Mercy to them, and anſwerably ſupply the neglect of Parents, by the vouchſafement of other means, as he doth to others born of unbelieving Parents, unto whom he is under no obligation by vertue of any peculiar Promiſe made to them: But it may ſeem that Parents neglect of their duty diſchargeth God from that obligation he is under by his Promiſe made to them on the behalf of their Children, and that muſt needs extremely hazard their ever injoying the Good of the Covenant. Now ſurely if any thing will cauſe ſorrow, or allay the joy of believing Parents at that day, againſt which joy is ſowen for the Righteous, and gladneſs for the upright in heart; this will do it, to miſs their Children in that day of Triumph, and that through their own default in point of duty towards them. Let me ſay, Is all the Good of the Covenant of ſo ſmall a value, as that a fond affection ſhall ſuperſede the diſcharge of your duty towards your Children? Or is everlaſting ſeparation from the preſence of God, and the glory of his Power ſo ſmall a matter, as that rather than you will put your ſelves to a little pains, or impoſe any difficulty upon your Children, you will hazard that? Will their roaring in Hell be a leſs evil than their crying under the ſmart of the Rod? Alas! what do Parents

think of Heaven or Hell, that they will hazard their Childrens loſs of the one, and undergoing the other upon ſuch trivial accounts?

2. Conſider, what excellent incouragements you have to a vigorous, faithful, and conſciencious performance of your duty towards them, which is the other thing remarkable in the forementioned Scripture, *viz.* the iſſue and fruit of the diſcharge of your duty, *They ſhall keep the way of the Lord*, implying at leaſt the uſual concurrence of a bleſſing from God with the diſcharge of your duty, and concurrence of the Spirit to make the means uſed effectual. God would not aſſert the efficacy of the means, but upon a ſuppoſition of his concurrence with them by his own Spirit and Bleſſing. It may poſſibly ſeem ſtrange to ſome, ſhould I ſay, whether ever any of the Seed of the Righteous apoſtatize from the ways of God, and thereby forfeit their Covenant-ſtate, but upon a failure in Parents in the due diſcharge of their duty, is a queſtion of more difficult determination, than is uſually apprehended, or appears at the firſt propoſal of it. But beſides the incouragement you have from this Scripture, how much more means have you ſubſerving the converſion of your Children, than others, who either are unbelievers themſelves, or deny their Childrens Covenant-intereſt, have? how many Motives have you to preſs upon them? what incouragements to propoſe to them? and conſequently what ground have you to hope for ſucceſs, that you ſhall not labour in vain? Theſe things I had ſometimes intended to have inlarged upon, but for ſome reaſons I ſhall contract. You may be ſufficiently furniſhed with incouragements from what hath been already ſaid. And therefore,

3. Conſider,

3. Conſider, how great a good your Childrens converſion will be to your ſelves as well as unto them. Doth not the comfort of your lives depend much upon the welfare of your Children? will it not highly advance your comfort, to be able to live in the World as in a ſtrange Land, as Heirs your ſelves, and as ſeeing your Children Joynt-heirs with you of an everlaſting inheritance in Heaven? would it not be your joy to ſee the Kingdom of Chriſt upheld, his Church continued and propagated by thoſe that proceed out of your own loyns? Beſides converting Grace will make them uſeful and ſerviceable unto you both in temporals and ſpirituals, See *Philemon* 11. Will it not doubly ſtrengthen your weak hands and feeble knees, when old age comes, to have them ſtrengthned and ſupported by the gracious words of your own Children? And ſurely, ſeeing Mothers have uſually moſt need of comfort from their Children, they ſhould be peculiarly careful to perform their duty towards them.

CHAP. XI.

The fourth grand Queſtion propoſed. The improvement that the Seed of Believers may and ought to make of their Covenant ſtate, as ratified by the Application of the Token of the Covenant, opened in four particulars. That great Queſtion, how long the Covenant-ſtate of the Seed of Believers is continued to them upon their Parents account, anſwered

ſo far as is neceſſary to prevent ſuch fears as either Parents or Children are ſubject to, as to the forfeiture of their Covenant-ſtate in their Child-hood.

Queſt. 4. WHat uſe and improvement may and ought the Seed of Believers make of the Token of the Covenant applyed to them in their Infancy, as they grow up to years of Maturity?

Anſw. The uſe and improvement they may and ought to make of it is great and of unſpeakable advantage to them. To inſtance in ſome few particulars.

1. They may and ought to improve it as a help to their underſtandings, that they may better, and more clearly apprehend, and conceive of the means and way through and by which they have the pardon of ſin, peace with God, and muſt come to the actual injoyment of Salvation, (which as the Seed of ſuch Parents they were born Heirs unto) which are the Blood of Chriſt, as applyed to them for the purging away the guilt of ſin, and the Spirit of Chriſt, as granted for the renovation of their natures. The Sacraments or Seals of the Covenant preſent to the eye what the Word preſents to the ear, and they are for the mutual illuſtration the one of the other. Now as this way, and theſe means are conſiderable under different notions, ſo they are ſhadowed and repreſented by different ſymbols or ſigns. The Blood of Chriſt, as purging away the guilt of ſin, was repreſented in Circumſion as to be ſhed; but it is repreſented in Baptiſm as already ſhed, and applyed to the party baptized. The body of ſin was repreſented in Circumciſion

ciſion under the notion of a ſuperfluity to be amputed and cut off: 'Tis repreſented in Baptiſm under the notion of a defilement or pollution, which is removed by waſhing. But the uſe of the one and the other in general was and is the ſame, namely to repreſent to the mind that way, and thoſe means, by and through which the ſoul hath remiſſion of ſin, peace with God, and is brought to future Salvation. Now Children, when they are inſtructed about this way and theſe means, they may and ought to reflect upon their Baptiſm, and ſee how both are repreſented and illuſtrated thereby, and by means thereof, they may come to more clear notions and conceptions of and about them, Inſtructions by ſigns are adapted to the capacities of Children. Indeed the Sacraments are ordained in a compliance with the weakneſs of Chriſtians in general. But

2. Which follows upon this, by the conſideration of their Baptiſm they will be kept under a due ſenſe of the indiſpenſible neceſſity of the Application of the Blood of Chriſt to them for their diſcharge from the guilt of ſin; and of the Spirit for their Regeneration and Renovation, in order to the continuing of their peace with God, and actual injoyment of future Salvation. And a threefold advantage will ariſe hereſrom.

1. They will be put upon ſerious enquiries, how it is with themſelves, whether they have the Blood of Chriſt ſo applyed or no? and whether they are ſo waſht by Regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, or no?

2. How they may attain to the one and the other, and be quickned up to a diligent uſe of thoſe means,

and

and performance of those duties they are directed to, subservient thereunto.

3. They will be kept from any attempts to establish a righteousness of their own, on the one hand, and on the other from presumptuous confiding in Christ without a real work of Regeneration and Sanctification. Baptism preacheth to all the way of pardon, peace with God, and future Salvation, to be by washing; by washing away the guilt of sin by the Blood of Christ, and the filth of sin by Sanctification. And this indeed is the use and improvement that all Christians should make of their Baptism. But

3. They may and ought to improve their Baptism to ingage, provoke, and stir up themselves to a closure in with the Covenant, and use of all means conducing to their injoyment of the Grace and Blessings of it. As this is a special end of God in appointing the Application of the Token of the Covenant to the Seed of Believers; so they are especially to be taught to make that improvement of it, and answerably they may and ought to do it. What obligations ly upon them to close in with the Covenant, and give up themselves to God in Christ, according to the tenour of it, arising from the Application of the Token to them, have been already declared: And Parents ought diligently to inform and instruct them in and about them; which would they do, and back those instructions with a due use of all the forementioned means to render them effectual, it may be rationally expected, they would have no little weight upon their hearts. And 'tis no small part of the Mercy of the Seed of Believers, as brought under the bond of the Covenant by the Application of the Token thereof unto them, that they have such obligations upon them,

them, whereby to provoke and ſtir up themſelves to an early ſeeking after God, and enquiring after his ways.

4. They may and ought to improve their Baptiſm for the help of their Faith and Hope, and for their incouragement to take hold of the Covenant: as alſo to ſeek unto God for Grace to inable them ſo to do. What an help it may be to their Faith and Hope, and what an incouragement to take hold of the Covenant they have thereby, may be concluded from what hath been already ſaid; and I muſt ſtill leave it to their Parents to inſtruct them therein, and ſhall haſten; only before I put a cloſe to the whole, I ſhall briefly touch upon one Queſtion, which that I ſhould ſpeak ſomewhat unto ſeems neceſſary. And that is, how long the Covenant-ſtate of the Seed of Believers, and conſequently their right to the Sign and Token of the Covenant, is continued to them as the Seed of ſuch Parents? When do the conditions of the Covenant become incumbent upon themſelves, ſo as that upon their failure in the performance of that their Covenant-ſtate is forfeited?

Anſw. It muſt be granted, This is a Queſtion of no eaſie reſolution, neither is it meet upon ſeveral accounts that it ſhould be perfectly determined. The exact reſolution of it muſt be left to that day, when all ſecrets ſhall be made manifeſt; and therefore I ſhall not adventure far into it. I ſhall only offer ſome more general things to conſideration, which may ſufficiently obviate and prevent ſuch doubts and fears that either Parents or Children are ſubject to, concerning their having forfeited their Covenant-ſtate, as might obſtruct their reſpective due improvement of it for the ſeveral uſes and ends aforementioned.

1. Let

1. Let the unſearchable riches of the Goodneſs, Grace and Love of God in Chriſt be conſidered. The Scripture every where ſpeaks of the Goodneſs, Grace and Love of God in Chriſt as inveſtigable, and incomprehenſible by any humane underſtanding. Hence are ſuch paſſages, *Oh how great is thy Goodneſs?* Pſal. 31. *How precious is thy Grace?* Pſal. 36. So, *God ſo loved the World.* The Love of Chriſt is ſaid to be *paſt knowledge.* And from the conſideration of the unſearchable riches of this Goodneſs, Grace and Love of God in Chriſt, it may be concluded, at leaſt comfortably hoped, that he hath not been very ſtrait or rigid (if I may ſo ſpeak) with the Seed of his People, and conſequently hath not limited their ſtanding under the Covenant upon their Parents account to the very firſt inſtant of their capability of any actual knowledge of ſupernatural things, or uſe of reaſon. We may rationally ſuppoſe, he hath allowed them ſome time to attain to ſome diſtinct knowledge, and to uſe their reaſon in cloſing in with, or rejecting the terms of the Covenant. And hence it muſt needs be exceeding uſeful for Parents to acquaint their Children betimes with the Nature of God, or if you will, which is all one, (though that expreſſion hath been moſt unreaſonably quarrelled at by ſome) it muſt needs be highly uſeful to Children to be well acquainted with, and inſtructed in and about the Perſon of Chriſt, into whoſe hand the adminiſtration of the Covenant is put. And here we have an inſtance of the uſefulneſs of acquaintance with the Perſon of Chriſt, with reference to things more darkly revealed in the Scriptures. It is not expreſsly revealed juſt when the performance of the condition of the Covenant becomes indiſpenſibly neceſſary to Children for the preſervation

preſervation of their Covenant-ſtate: but now the knowledge of Chriſt, or of God in him, as how unſearchable rich in Goodneſs, Grace and Love he is, may much relieve both Parents and Children under thoſe doubts and fears they are ſubject to about the forfeiture of their Covenant-ſtate: They may conclude certainly God hath not been ſo rigid upon them, as to limit their ſtanding in it to ſo ſhort a time, as that the forfeiture of it ſhall be little leſs than neceſſary, or hardly in an ordinary way unavoidable.

2. It may be further conſidered, that it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed, that God hath ſo extended the Covenant to the Seed of his People, as that their acceptation or refuſal of it ſhould appear to Angels and Men juſtly and rationally rewardable or puniſhable. This may be inferred from the Juſtice and Wiſdom of God, taken in conjunction with his ultimate end (*viz.* the Glorification of all his Attributes) in his dealings, eſpecially in a Covenant-way with Man. Now this ſeems neceſſarily to require that ſo much time ſhould be allowed them, as ſo far to underſtand, and make a judgment of the Covenant, as containing ſuch Promiſes upon ſuch terms, as that their acceptation or rejection ſhould be free and voluntary, and not either a mere inforcement of their Parents on the one hand, or on the other not the mere product of Childiſh weakneſs and vanity. What may be objected againſt this from God's puniſhing Original ſin in Infants will receive a ready anſwer from the difference between their caſes, and the caſes of the Infant-ſeed of Believers we now ſpeak of. But

3. I would offer at leaſt as matter of enquiry, whether the Covenant is or can be broken by the Seed of Believers any others ways, than it would be broken

by

by Believers themselves, supposing it possible for them to break it, which we grant, all things considered, it is not. Now it is not the bare suspension of the due acting and exercise of Grace, no nor every commission of sin, no not of particular sins of a very heinous nature, that breaks the Covenant between God and them. One of these three things I conceive are necessary thereunto. Either

1. A Man must make a free and voluntary choice of some false God, and answerably freely and voluntarily ingage in the worship and service of such a God. Or else

2. Must make a free and voluntary choice of some temporal good as his portion, and answerably set that up in his heart and affections above God, and pursue it as his supreme and chief good. Or else

3. A Man must with a free and full consent of will ingage in some way of moral impieties, as designing, if not explicitly, yet implicitly the utmost of what happiness he expects in this life in the gratification and satisfaction of the lusts of his own heart. † I confess these things require a larger explication, but I can but touch upon them in general at present: But until one or another of these things be done, the Covenant is not broken, nor the Covenant-relation between God and them dissolved. Now I shall not be positive, only propose it as a matter of enquiry, whether the Covenant can be broken any other way by the Seed of Believers? This we may observe, that we have no instance in Scripture of God's rejecting any of the Seed of his People out of Covenant, but upon some overt act on their parts, evidently declaring their rejection of the Covenant one or the other

* *See* Doctor Preston *on the Covenant.*

other of those ways mentioned, and that when grown up to a capacity of making a free and voluntary choice. Those two instances of *Ishmael* and *Esau* are remarkable, and may be useful for the guiding our judgements in this matter. The one, *viz.* *Ishmael* evidently declares his rejection of the Covenant by persecuting his brother *Isaac*. The other, *viz.* *Esau* by selling his birth-right. Now we know both these were grown up to a capacity of making a free and voluntary choice. 'Tis true God may withdraw himself from some, and leave them to such a rejection of the Covenant sooner than he doth others; which may be a caution to all the Seed of Believers to take heed of deferring personally to take hold of the Covenant. But whether their Covenant-state be forfeited before such an actual rejection of the Covenant, may be questioned.

4. Let it be considered, that until Childrens rejection of the Covenant one or another of the ways mentioned become apparent by some overt act on their parts, both their Parents and themselves may comfortably hope (suppose they cannot positively conclude) the Covenant is not broken by them. While their omissions or commissions are only such as are incident to Saints, there is ground to hope the Covenant may stand firm. And there is a double ground for such a hope.

1. A possibility or probability that the Covenant may yet be continued to them upon their Parents account. This appears from the aforegoing consideration.

2. There is a possibility or probability that a seed of Grace may be wrought or implanted in the soul, though it have not exerted it self in any sensible acts, but

but hath been ſuppreſſed and kept under by the vain workings of a childiſh and youthful mind, and buddings forth of corruption. A ſeed of Grace may be, and often is ſowen in the hearts of the Seed of Believers in the very dawning of their Youth or Childhood, which yet diſcovers not it ſelf for a long time after, at leaſt in any ſenſible acts of Grace. And hence it is that ſo many of the Seed of the Righteous can give no account of the time or means of their converſion. And it may be from this Seed of Grace, that the Soul, though it have not actually recognized the Covenant, nor explicitly cloſed in with God in Chriſt, yet is preſerved from rejecting the Covenant any of the ways mentioned. Now whilſt ſuch as are deſcended from believing Parents have any rational ground to hope that the Covenant between God and them is inviolate, they may take great incouragement from the conſideration of it to cloſe in with Chriſt, and ſeek for renewing Grace. Yet

5. Let me add one thing more, and that is this, While the Seed of Believers are kept from an abſolute rejection of the Covenant, though they may have a great while neglected to recognize it, and make an actual ſaving cloſe with Chriſt, and anſwerably may not yet have a ſaving work of Grace wrought in them, there is ground of hope, they may yet abide for God, and God may abide for them, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Hoſ.* 3. 3. And ſuppoſe the Covenant ſhould be forfeited according to the exact terms of it, and God might have juſtly taken the forfeiture, yet the conſideration of the Covenant as entred with them in their Infancy, as the Seed of ſuch Parents, may be improved by them as a very great incouragement at laſt to take hold of the Covenant. God in ſuch caſes is exceeding

ready

ready to renew his Covenant with the Seed of his People. This seems to be one of the great incouragements that the *Jews* will have to return unto God, when he takes away the vail from off their hearts; *behold*, say they, *We come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God*, Jer. 3. 22. The words are, as an invitation from God to them to return, so a Prophesie of their answering that invitation in the latter age of the World. Now they will not be able to lay claim to an actual Covenant-relation between God and them, for that Covenant was long since broken through their unbelief; but they have abode for God, and God hath abode for them, and as having so abode the one for the other, they call him their God, and incourage themselves by the consideration of the designation (as I may so speak) that God hath made of them for himself, and of himself to be a God and Husband unto them, giving them a kind of incomplete and remote interest in him, to return to God. Those that God hath kept for himself, and for whom he abides, he will readily receive when they return to him: And this may greatly incourage Parents with reference to their Children as grown up; though they do not evidence any saving work of Grace, yet they are kept from one or another of the ways whereby the Covenant is broken; it may be they abide for God, and he abides for them, he may keep them out of a design yet at last to marry them to himself. And as it may incourage Parents in their hopes concerning their Children, so it may greatly incourage Children to close in with Christ, and thereby renew their Covenant with God. So that we may see, though it cannot be properly determined how long the Covenant-interest of Children is continued upon their Parents

account, yet that ſhould be no prejudice to their taking the full incouragement to believe, and cloſe in with Chriſt, and ſeek for that Grace promiſed to inable them thereunto, that their Covenant-ſtate hath an aptitude to yeeld to them. They may take all the incouragements afore declared that they have, though there be an uncertainty about the preciſe time when the condition of the Covenant devolves upon themſelves. To come then to a cloſe; I ſhall only ſpeak a few words to the Children of Believers, and let me ſay to you, You now ſee what a glorious ſtate you are in as under the Covenant, and intereſted in the Promiſes thereof. Will you now refuſe ſo great Salvation? yea, will you not only refuſe ſo great Grace when offered, but reject it when granted to you, by neglecting to take hold of the Covenant already entred with you, or ſeeking unto God for his Spirit, through whoſe aſſiſtance your duty will be made eaſie and delightful to you? and this not only when you are under the greateſt obligations to accept of the Covenant, but when you have ſo many incouragements above what the reſt of Mankind have to hope for a ready acceptation with God, and concurrence of his Spirit and Bleſſing to aſſiſt you in the performance of your duty, and ſucceed all your endeavours for Grace? Oh how will you of all Perſons appear at the great day of the Lord that is ready to come upon you? Where do you think to ſtand at that day? Were you to get into ſuch an eſtate, your incouragements would be leſs; but it is only your continuance in that ſtate that you are to ſecure. God hath (as I may ſo ſpeak) brought you again into Paradiſe, and will you again caſt your ſelves out? Surely of all Perſons in the World you will be leaſt able to relieve your

ſelves

ſelves under your miſery, by pleading the neceſſity of your ruine, that it was *Adam* the firſt Parent of Mankind, that brought it upon you. You are diſcharged from the guilt you were under as in his loyns, you are actually received into the Covenant of Grace. The Law cannot condemn you, 'tis only your rejection of the new Covenant, and that when actually entred with you that can be your condemnation. And if you ſay we cannot change our own natures; remember you are of that Houſe or Family to which the Promiſes of ſaving Grace do appertain, yea you are in a peculiar and eſpecial manner in ſome reſpects above the reſt of that Houſe or Family the Objects of theſe Promiſes, and therefore know your own Mercies and Priviledges, and do not wilfully caſt your ſelves out of ſo glorious an eſtate, nor deprive your ſelves of ſuch a glorious Inheritance, or Inheritance in glory you were born Heirs unto.

POSTSCRIPT.

SO great and glorious are those priviledges, benefits and advantages that have been assigned to the seed of Believers, as received into the Covenant of Grace, and having the Covenant with the promises appertaining to them ratified sealed and confirmed to them by the application of the token thereof, that it cannot be rationally expected that what hath been said should meet with a ready imbracement by consciencious Christians, while either the grounds of that their Covenant Interest and right to the token, or the necessary redundancy of these priviledges benefits and advantages therefrom remain obscure and inevident to them: As for the necessary redundancy of these priviledges benefits and advantages from their Covenant-state, taken in conjunction with the promises appertaining to them, as the one and the other are ratified sealed and confirmed by the application of the token, I conceive that is sufficiently evident from the foregoing discourse. I shall add no more to that; But it seems somewhat necessary that I should a little reflect upon both the grounds laid to their Covenant-Interest, and the dueness of the application of the token to them on the account thereof (for the establishment of which I have amongst others cast in my mite in a Treatise sometime since published) which in the general are these two.

First, the tenour of the Covenant it self both in respect of the promissory and preceptive part of it.

Secondly, the practice of the Church and People of God throughout all ages in appropriating the Covenant with the promises of it, and applying the token to their Infant-seed, notified to us partly by Scripture, and partly by Ecclesiastical History; because two late Authors have endeavoured to raise some dust for the obscruing both of them, and hiding their evidence from persons of less piercing understandings and weaker Judgment: As for the one of them, *viz.* Mr. *Danvers*, his main design being only to hide the latter of these grounds, and that as the knowledg of it is conveyed to us by Ecclesiastical History which we stand not much upon, it being enough, if so be it evidently appear from Scripture that the tenour of the Covenant be such as necessarily infers the Infant-seed of Believers interest

in

in it, and right to the token of it, and that anſwerably the practice of the Church and People of God, during the times Scripture-records extend unto, was to appropriate the Covenant, and apply the token of it to their infant Seed. Hence I ſhall add little beyond what I have elſewhere ſaid for the ſcattering of that duſt raiſed by him, partly becauſe the main deſign he hath ſeen meet to lay out himſelf in purſuance of is but of an inferiour importance, and more eſpecially becauſe of the little ground there is to fear that what he has done in purſuance of his deſign ſhould be much regarded in ſuch an age of light as this is, the practice of the Church being ſo generally among all learned Men known to be otherwiſe than he endeavours to repreſent it; beſides, his own Book carries a ſufficient Antidote againſt any evil influence it might otherwiſe have upon wiſe Men: and therefore I ſhall immediately come to the other, *viz.*, Mr. *Hutchiſon*; I am more eſpecially concerned in his attempts, which are to obſcure that foundation laid to the Covenant-intereſt and Baptiſm of the Infant-ſeed of Believers in the tenour of the Covenant it ſelf, in order whereunto he has made publick a ſmall Treatiſe concerning the Covenant and Baptiſm, compoſed Dialogue-wiſe between a Baptiſt and an Anti-Pædo-Baptiſt, with ſome Animadverſions upon a late Piece put forth by my ſelf in anſwer to Mr. *Danvers* his Treatiſe of Baptiſm. As for the Gentleman himſelf, I am an equal ſtranger to him as to Mr. *Danvers*, and therefore can have no prejudice againſt either of their Perſons, neither would I in the leaſt diſcourage or oppoſe any in any attempts to further the deciſion of this great Controverſie; why ſhould I grudge any the liberty that my ſelf have taken? only I could wiſh that thoſe, that conceive themſelves under a call to appear either in the defence of what they conceive to be according to truth, or againſt what they conceive to be oppoſite thereunto, would remember that exhortation of the Apoſtle to *Timothy*, where he exhorts him to ſhew himſelf a Workman that need not be aſhamed. 'Tis true, unavoidable failures will attend humane weakneſs and imperfection, which may juſtly cauſe ſomewhat of ſhame; but, notwithſtanding them, the deſign and intendment of that exhortation may be anſwered. Whether our Author have ſhewed himſelf ſuch a Workman will preſently appear; whether himſelf be ſo free from Gall and Vinegar (which he ſo vehemently impeaches his Oppoſites writings of) as becomes a reprover, I ſhall leave to the judgment of others; 'tis what he hath written, not the manner of his writing, that I ſhall concern my ſelf about. To begin with this Treatiſe of the Covenant; three things lie ſo ob-

vious in it, that to me (how it may be to others I know not) it is utterly uſeleſs as to the deſign carried on in it, which I ſhall only remark, and leave it to every one to value and improve it as they ſee cauſe.

The firſt is the miſtakes he proceeds upon, to give only a two-fold inſtance.

Firſt, He ſuppoſes, the only ground that can be laid to the Church-memberſhip and Baptiſm of Infants, is their relation to *Abraham* as his Seed. Hence having, as he ſuppoſes, proved that they can ſtand in no ſuch relation to him, he conceives he has utterly overthrown their Church-memberſhip and Baptiſm, thus *Page* 3. A groſs miſtake, we found their Church-memberſhip and Baptiſm upon the tenour of the Covenant as made with *Abraham*'s Seed in their Generation, that is, with them and their natural Children, but whether they are to have the denomination of, and are to be reckoned among *Abraham*'s Seed, is another Queſtion. And if it be ſaid

Obj. But we do account them as *Abraham*'s Seed, though we do not ground their Church-memberſhip and Baptiſm thereupon.

Anſw. It's true we do ſo; but then it will be ſaid, how can we avoid the abſurdities mentioned, *Page* the 5.

Anſw. They are no other than what our Author himſelf fathers upon the Holy Ghoſt (to uſe his Phraſe) in affirming ſome Infants to be ſaved without a perſonal Faith; for it may be thus argued; If none are ſaved but ſuch as believe, then no Infants can be ſaved; but the antecedent is true, *Mark* 16. *He that believes ſhall be ſaved:* and if it be ſaid that's meant of the Adult; the ſame ſuppoſed abſurdity will follow; for, according to our Author, then Chriſt muſt be ſuppoſed to ſay, he that believes and he that believes not ſhall be ſaved. Let him avoid the abſurdity in the one, and we ſhall alike avoid the abſurdity in the other.

Another miſtake that he proceeds upon is, That at leaſt ſome Pædo-Baptiſts may aſcribe their Childrens intereſt in the Covenant to *Abraham*'s Faith, and conſequently may plead that though their Children have no right to the Covenant by vertue of their Parents Faith, yet they may have a right to it by vertue of *Abraham's*, thus *Page* 12; and he ſpends about ten Pages to confute this Plea that he ſuppoſes ſome Pædo-Baptiſts may make: which is a mere miſtake about his Oppoſers Principles, or rather a mere impertinency; for where hath he found in all the writings of Pædo-Baptiſts ſuch a Plea managed? and hence

whereas

whereas he supposes himself to have utterly overthrown the chief grounds laid by Pædo-Baptists to the Covenant-interest and Baptism of the Infant-seed of Believers, and thereupon tells us *Page* 22. he might end the matter there; the truth is, he hath said nothing at all to the purpose, but proceeded merely upon mistakes; neither the one nor the other of the grounds that he supposes Pædo-Baptists bottom their claim to the Covenant-interest and Baptism of their Infant-seed upon, is the true ground they bottom that their claim upon; whence his discourse hitherto hath been utterly impertinent, of no use at all as to the end he designs by it.

Another thing rendring his whole discourse useless to me, is his assuming and taking for granted without the least shew or proof what he knew, at least might have known, is absolutely denied by at least some if not a considerable part of Pædo-Baptists. I shall instance in three things:

First, That the Covenant entred with *Abraham* and his Seed in their Generation did extend to and take in all his Seed at least descended by *Isaac* and *Jacob* during their first-Testament-administration, and that merely as his Seed; upon this supposition he proceeds in a considerable part of his Book; but now he knew, at least might have known, that this is absolutely denied, and on the other hand it is affirmed, that *Jacob*, who was *Abraham*'s grandchild, was not in Covenant merely as he was of *Abraham*'s Posterity, but as he was the child of believing *Isaac* included with him in that Phrase, *thy Seed in their Generations*.

Secondly, He assumes and takes for granted, that the Covenant of Grace is made with the Elect as such, and consequently that all the Elect, and only they are in the Covenant of Grace; hence he tells us *Page* 23. that the Covenant or Promise of eternal Life (which he calls (and I blame him not for it) the Covenant of Grace) is only proper to the Elect. This he might have known would be denied; and it is on the contrary affirmed that no Covenant is actually made with any of the Elect as such.

Thirdly, He affirms, and takes it for granted, that that Covenant, called by the Apostle *the old Covenant*, which was then vanishing, is a Covenant made with *Abraham*, which he might have known is denied, and that it is affirmed, that that Covenant spoken of by the Apostle, is that Covenant made with the People of *Israel* at Mount *Sinai*; and his affirming so many things, and proceeding in a considerable part of his Book upon a supposition of the truth of them, when they are all mistakes and unsound

ſuppoſitions, his whole Diſcourſe muſt needs be, if not wholly, yet in a great meaſure uſeleſs.

Thirdly, That which yet further renders his Treatiſe altogether uſeleſs to me, is the great confuſion attended with ſeveral abſurdities and contradictions that it labours under: thus for his whole Diſcourſe upon that of *Gen.* 17. 7. beginning *Page* 22. and reaching to *Page* 39. this confuſion, with the abſurdities and contradictions attending it, will appear, if we take notice of ſome of his aſſertions, and compare them one with another, together with what they do, either as taken ſingly or joyntly, neceſſarily infer and imply, thus:

Firſt, He poſitively affirms, that the Covenant of Grace, and its Adminiſtration, are two diſtinct Covenants, thus, *Page* 23. and tells us *Page* 93. that the Covenant of Circumciſion, which muſt neceſſarily intend that Covenant which before he affirmed to be the Adminiſtration of the Covenant of Grace, may be called a Covenant of Works, and then a Covenant of Works may be the Adminiſtration of the Covenant of Grace; which, whether rational and congruous, I ſhall leave all Men to judge.

Secondly, He expreſsly affirms, that the Adminiſtration of the Covenant of Grace under the New Teſtament is called the New Covenant; thus again, *Page* 23. where it is evident, he hath reference to *Heb.* 8. 8. and then all thoſe Promiſes there mentioned by the Apoſtle of God's putting his Law in the mind are not of the ſubſtance, only appertain to the Adminiſtration of the Covenant of Grace.

Thirdly, He affirms, at leaſt neceſſarily implyes, that that grand Promiſe of the Covenant, wherein God promiſes to be a God to *Abraham* and his Seed, as made to one, yea to one and the ſame Perſon, as conſidered under one notion, appertains only to the Adminiſtration, but as made to another or to the ſame Perſon conſidered under another notion, is of the eſſence and ſubſtance of the Covenant of Grace, thus *Page* 26. he tells us (ſpeaking of this very Promiſe) that in it God promiſed only to *Abraham*'s fleſhly Seed to be a God to them in giving them the Land of *Canaan*, but to his ſpiritual Seed to be a God to them in giving unto them eternal Life; and he takes *Iſaac* to be the ſubject of the Promiſe as taken both ways, and the Promiſes as made to *Abraham*'s fleſhly Seed he calls the Covenant of Circumciſion, which elſewhere he ſays was but the Adminiſtration of the Covenant, and may be called a Covenant of Works. And what confuſion and what abſurdities this implyes, let every one judge. But to get out of theſe dark labyrinths,

Fourthly,

Fourthly, He affirms, that *Iſaac* himſelf by vertue of his fleſhly deſcent, as he ſpeaks, had no intereſt in the Covenant of Grace, ſo he tells us *Page* 27. and yet,

Fifthly, He poſitively affirms, that none had or have an intereſt in the Covenant of Grace, but through a perſonal Faith in Chriſt, thus *Page* 28. which as it directly contradicts what he had ſaid of the Covenant of Grace, its being made only with the Elect, and with all them; for ſure he will grant ſome are Elect that are not actual Believers: ſo it utterly deprives *Iſaac* as well as all the reſt of *Abraham*'s Seed, and indeed all Infants whatſoever, of any benefit by the Covenant of Grace, by which yet he affirms them to be ſaved, ſuppoſing their Election and Death in their Infancy. Let us ſee then what a Good God promiſed to *Iſaac* as one of *Abraham*'s Children, why only this, that he would be a God to him in giving him the Land of *Canaan*, which yet he never did, nor ever intended to give him: Of what uſe ſuch a confuſed abſurd and contradictory diſcourſe can be to any, I cannot imagine. I might yet further ſhew what renders his diſcourſe uſeleſs to me, (*viz.*) his overlooking ſeveral of none of the leaſt forcible Scriptures and Scripture-arguments produced by his Oppoſers in confirmation of their Judgements and Practice; but I ſhall go no further, but leave his Book to every one to make what uſe they ſee meet of it. And proceed to his Animadverſions upon my anſwer to Mr. *Danvers*. Indeed would but Readers take Mr. *Danvers*'s Book and my Anſwer, with my former Treatiſe ſo often referred to, and his Animadverſions, and peruſe them with equal and unbyaſſed minds, it would be all that I deſire; yet that all Men may ſee how needleſs a thing it is to make any Returns to ſuch Replyes, as theſe Animadverſions carry a ſhew of, and may know how to regulate their expectations for the future,

I ſhall with much brevity review them. My Anſwer conſiſts of three parts.

In the firſt I lay down ſeveral conſiderations with reference to Mr. *Danvers*'s authorities. In the two firſt, which Mr. *Hutchinſon* more eſpecially takes notice of, I charge him with unfaithfulneſs and impertinency, in reſpect of both which Mr. *Hutchinſon* pretends his vindication. For the former, (*viz.*) his unfaithfulneſs, I only gave two Inſtances, and both in his Quotations out of the *Magdi-Burgenſian Hiſtory*, for the truth of which charges, I ſhall refer the Reader to that Famous Hiſtory; with this only remark beyond my Anſwer it ſelf, that there is a vaſt difference between, ſaying, they find they

baptized

baptised only the Adult, and they only find they baptized the Adult: indeed they neither say the one or the other, but the direct contrary; yet allow our Opposers the utmost they can with the least shew of reason desire, it is only the latter that can be said of them; And surely there is a greater difference between saying they find they baptized only the Adult, and they only find the Adult were baptized, than is between two six pences and a shilling: hence no Man can excuse him of unfaithfulness; but he will find at last he hath given just cause to his own Conscience to accuse himself. For the other (*viz.*) his impertinencies, and thus Mr. *Hutchinson* pretends his vindication two ways.

First, By way of Recrimination.

Secondly, By acquitting his Book of that charge.

For this latter I shall only refer the Reader to my Book, with the instances there given.

For the former, I have only this to say: Whether that instance given by Mr. *Hutchinson* will prove his charge, I shall not be Judge, but this may be said, for me to be guilty only of one impertinency (and but one is charged upon me,) is no just vindication of Mr. *Danvers* in the multitude I have charged upon him. And this I shall add, that had I known all Mens hearts, as well as Mr. *Hutchinson* pretends to know mine, and had seen no such objection, as that supposed impertinency designs the obviating of, I had not been guilty of that one neither, but that such an objection may possibly enter into the minds of men Mr. *Hutchinson*'s Book abundantly confirms me, and therefore I shall be so far further impertinent, as to tell him, I am yet in *statu quo*, and consequently if I had any such design as he intimates his suspition I had, it has miscarried, only I have this in lieu, that being freed from family-intanglements, I have a greater liberty to attend the service of Christ in vindicating his truths from such assailants. But to go on, the second part of my Answer shews the insufficiency of Mr. *Danvers* proofs for Believers Baptism in opposition to that of Infants, with reference to Mr. *Hutchinson's* Animadversions. To this part I shall only remark three things, and leave them.

First, Is his complyance with me, in what he yet seems, and that with severe reflections upon me, to oppose, thus in all those instances I had given of things indeterminable by the Commission for the preaching of the Gospel, and administration of Baptism, to evidence the necessity of taking in other Scriptures for the full understanding of Christ's mind therein.

Now

Now Mr. *Huthinson* himself does, what I say we ought to do, neither dares he deny any of those things I offer to consideration to shew the invallidity of Mr. *Danvers* his Argument drawn from that Commission; and yet with what vehemency does he seem to oppose it?

The second is the gross mistakes Mr. *Hutchinson* proceeds upon; thus he mistakes my very design in this part of my Book, supposes me to be proving Infant-Baptism, when that is none of my design or business; that he proceeds on this mistake is evident as from variety of Passages, so eminently from that Paragraph *Page* 21. beginning about line 18. so also from *Page* 55. upper end, hence what he animadverts with the greatest shew of plausability as concerning the baptizing of the Children of Unbelievers, *Bells*, &c. *Page* 17. is wholly impertinent: Alas! how easie to shew, that that will not prove any Doctrine or Practice, which was never designed for that end?

Again, as he mistakes my design and business, so he mistakes about the ground I would have laid for Infant-Baptism, had it been my work there to prove that Practice; Hence he supposes that I take it for grauted, that Infants were Chuch-members under the Law, *Page* 22. when I neither did, nor had any occasion to meddle with their Church-membership either under the Law, or under the Gospel: And he still goes upon his mistakes in his attempts to shew the repeal of that Priviledge, from *Paul's* preaching that the *Gentiles ought not to circumcise their Children*, he supposes that Circumcision gave a right to, as well as the actual possession of Church-membership, and that we hold the command for Circumcision did vertually include a command for Baptism, both which are gross mistakes. That which gave a right to Church-membership was the Covenant, and it is the command to keep the Covenant that obliges to Baptism: but Mr. *Hutchinson* either cannot, or will not distinguish between that command as more generally laid down, and reaching all *Abraham*'s Seed, whether natural or mystical, and the command laid upon *Abraham*'s Seed to observe that special Rite of Circumcision, as the Covenant, that is, the Token of the Covenant, then to be kept: and alas! what heed can be given to Men that proceed upon such gross mistakes?

Thirdly, That which lies alike plain and obvious with both the foregoing particulars is his overlooking what he ought to have taken notice of. Thus he wholly overlooks all that I had written in my former Treatise designedly for the proof of Infant-Baptism, and whereunto I often refer in this my Answer, though he

he had ſeen it: So he takes no notice of what intimations I gave of offering ſomething further to publike view (which is now made publick) concerning the Doctrine of the Covenant, as Infants are concerned therein; and from his overlooking of both a conſiderable part of his Animadverſions are either wholly impertinent, as to me, or in anſwering a matter before he hath heard it; take for an inſtance his whole Diſcourſe upon that Promiſe, *Acts* 2. 39. beginning *Page* 26. and ending *Page* 30. yea he overlooks what is written in this very Book he animadverts upon. Hence *Page* 11. he calls for a reconciliation of our ſeeming contradictions, which had been needleſs, had he attended to what he might have found in *Page* 13, 14, 15 of my Anſwer; Hence again are thoſe Queſtions *Page* 30. about the Salvation of all in the houſes of Believers, which are anſwered at the 113th *Page* and ſo on of my Anſwer; and Men will make but ſorry work in their Replyes to our Animadverſions upon any Book, when they overlook what their Antagoniſts have written, or declare their intentions to write.

Thirdly, My Anſwer conſiſts in a vindication of thoſe grounds laid by Pædo-Baptiſts for their Judgment and Practice. As to what Mr. *Hutchinſon* animadverts upon this part, I need ſay little, he ſeems to have been himſelf utterly at a loſs what to ſay, yea he ſeems to be in a kind of maze, witneſs that Argument, (the only Argument he lays down ſyllogiſtically in his Animadverſion) *Page* 39. unleſs he be greatly abuſed by the Printer; witneſs alſo his crying out *Ignoratio Elenchi*, where no Argument was laid down by me; yet once again witneſs his reaſonings *Page* 47. Hence he wholly paſſes over theſe ſeveral Arguments I had occaſionally laid down to prove the tenour of the Covenant to be ſuch as infallibly infers the intereſt of the Seed of Believers in it, excepting only, that afterwards he ſingles out here and there a paſſage without due regard to their Contexts, and animadverts upon them at his pleaſure, and himſelf becomes opponent, and pretends to determine three of thoſe four Queſtions I had ſaid the reſolution of which were neceſſary, and ſufficient for the diſcovery of the grounds laid in the Covenant, as at firſt eſtabliſhed with *Abraham*, for Infant-Baptiſm, which he only does by a naked repetition of Mr. *Danvers* unproved dictates, with the addition of ſome by-diſcourſes which appertain not to the Queſtions propoſed, and yet hath the confidence to conclude *Page* 47. So then theſe things being found mere miſtakes on Mr. *Whiſtons* ſide, we may conclude

conclude they have no footing in the Covenant for Infant-Baptiſm.

And alſo what does he think of the Men, even of his own perſwaſion? can he think there is any of them ſo weak, or ſo far blinded, as not to ſee the frivolouſneſs of ſuch Animadverſions? But not to tire the Reader, only I muſt beg Mr. *Hutchinſon*'s patience a little longer, I have a few words to him and have done.

Firſt, *Sir*, I aſſure you I have read, yea had read, long before my Anſwer to Mr. *Danvers* ſaw the light, that Exercitation of Doctor *Owen*, and in ſpecial that part of it you refer me to, and can find nothing in that, or any other of his writings, as a cure to that ignorance you ſpeak of, I am at as great a loſs about thoſe Promiſes Mr. *Danvers* mentions as I was before, and muſt tell you, you greatly miſtake, and conſequently greatly wrong that learned and judicious Author. How you and Mr. *Danvers* look upon your ſelves I know not, but certainly I ſhould be juſtly cenſured as a very unworthy Man, ſhould I wreſt Authors words, who are yet alive, to countenance my own ſentiments in a contradiction to their known practice, before I had conſulted the Authors themſelves, and known how they would reconcile their words and practice. Will you but read the whole Exercitation, and allow him the liberty that all writers, whether ſacred or humane, uſe, you will find he is vaſtly more for me than for you; He is only ſhewing how God did preſerve *Abraham*'s natural Poſterity as grown up in a viſible ſtanding under the Covenant till our Lord Chriſt came, that the Promiſe made to him concerning the *Meſſias* coming of his loyns might be accompliſhed, he meddles not with the caſe of Infants, but ſuppoſeth them viſibly in Covenant as the Seed of Parents viſibly ſo; when will you leave thus to abuſe Authors whoſe names are precious in all the Churches of Chriſt? But

Secondly, I have a few things to reccommend to your Conſcience, and theſe are of two ſorts.

Firſt, Such as concern my ſelf, thus *Page* 3. where you uſe the Poets words, ſo *Page* 5. *line* 10, 11. *Page* 26. *line* the laſt, *Page* 22. *line* 1, 2. with others of a like nature: can you prove what you have written? if not, what will you call theſe things?

Secondly, Such as concern matter of Fact: thus ſee what you write *Page* 3. where do I ſay Mr. *Danvers* Book is all forgery,

or

or leave that to the Readers obſervation? See alſo *Page* 4. *line* 2. again ſee what you write *Page* 34. three laſt lines, and compare it with my Anſwer *Page* 39. and 40. will you or any Man elſe deny what I there take for granted? Again ſee what you write *Page* 7. *line* 24, 25. Is the ſilence of the Scripture, as abſolutely conſidered, my beloved Argument, yea or any Argument at all? I only enquire (and give my Reaſons for the affirmation,) whether, ſuppoſing the Covenant was extended to the Seed of Believers under the firſt Teſtament, (which I judged I had formerly ſufficiently proved that it was,) what may be truly ſaid of the ſilence of the Scripture, (not whether the ſilence of the Scriptures as abſolutely taken) concerning the Baptiſm of Infants do not make it vaſtly more probable that they ought, then that they ought not to be baptized: and that ſuppoſition being granted, I judge I ſhall have but few gain-ſayers. Yet again, ſee what you write *Page* 50. *line* 1, 2. and compare it with my Anſwer, *Page* 117, 118, 119. and ſee whether there is any ſuch reaſon given by me or no; you may alſo reflect upon your 18th *Page*, and conſider, whether what I ſuppoſe be a granting that the commiſſion was given only with reſpect to the Adult. *Sir*, I cannot think you can have ſuch a value for your Animadverſions as you ſuppoſe me to have for my Book, as for others I can hardly think there is any one learned Man of your own Perſwaſion but will bluſh to ſee ſuch Animadverſions fly abroad from the pen of any of their party. *Sir*, I have only one thing more, and that is to intreat you not to complain of unmerciful dealing; will you ſeriouſly review your Book; you will find I have dealt gently with you; and that you may not ſay I have wronged you, if you deſire it, and can procure the teſtimony of any two learned Anti-Pædo-Baptiſts that they judge your Book deſerves, or can know that any two conſcientious learned Pædo-Baptiſts judge it deſerves a more full conſideration, your deſire (if providence interpoſe not) ſhall be gratified.

FINIS.

Some Books lately Printed for, and sold by Jonathan Robinſon *at the* Golden-Lion *in St.* Paul's *Church-Yard.*

THe Harmony of the Divine Attributes in contriving Man's Redemption by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, &c. By *W. Bates* D. D. in *quarto*, the ſecond Edition enlarged, with an Alphabetical Table.

XL *Sermons* on ſeveral occaſions, preached at *Cambridge*, and elſwhere, By the late Reverend and Learned *Anthony Tuckney* D. D. in *quarto*.

Mr. *Theoph. Gale*'s Anatomy of Infidelity. *octavo*.

—Idea Theologiæ *tam Contemplativæ tam Activæ*, &c. *in* 12s.

Mr. *J. Fladoes*, Quakeriſm no Chriſtianity. *octavo*.

—Vindication of the XXI Divines.

A *Conteſt for Chriſtianity*, or an Account of two great Diſputes between the Anabaptiſts and the Quakers.

Infant-Baptiſm Aſſerted and Vindicated by Scripture and Antiquity, &c. By *O. Wills* M. A.

More Proofs for Infant Church-Membership, and conſequently their right to Baptiſm, &c. By *R. Baxter*.

Vindiciæ Vindiciarum, or Infant-Baptiſm Re-aſſerted and Vindicatrd. By *O. Wills*.

A Treatiſe of *Juſtifying Righteouſneſs*, &c. In anſwer to Dr. *Tully* and Mr. *Chr. Cartwright*. By *R. Baxter*.

Principles made Practical, or Directions for plain Chriſtians to pray on moſt occaſions, and to prepare themſelves for the Lord's Supper, by the uſe and knowledge of the Aſſemblies Catechiſm.

The great Concern, or a ſerious Warning to a timely and through-preparation for Death, &c. By *Edw. Pearce*.

A Beam of Divine Glory, or a Treatiſe of God's Unchangeableneſs. By the ſame Author.

Correction, Inſtruction, or a Treatiſe of Affliction. By *T. Caſe* in *twelves*.

The poor doubting Chriſtian drawn to Chriſt. By *T. Hooker* in *twelves*.

The worthy Communicant, or a Treatiſe ſhewing the due order of receiving the Lord's Supper. By *Jer. Dyke*. in *twelves*, with a Sacramental Catechiſm, &c.

The Barren Fig-tree, or the fruitleſs Profeſſor's doom. By *John Bunyan*, in *twelves*.

Solitude improved by Divine Meditations. By *N. Rankew*, in *octavo*.

The Life and Death of *Mr. Thomas Tregoſs*, ſometime Miniſter in *Cornwal*, in *octavo*.

The ſinfulneſs of Sin, and the fulneſs of Chriſt, &c. By *W. Bridg*.

The loſt Sinner ſought out by Jeſus Chriſt.